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MEMOIR AND REMAINS

OF THE

REV. JAMES D. BURNS, M.A.

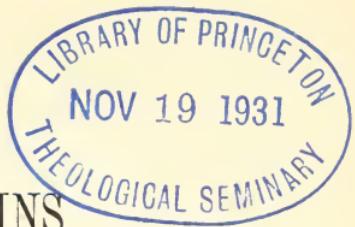
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James De Burns



MEMOIR AND REMAINS

OF THE

REV. JAMES D. BURNS, M.A.

OF HAMPSTEAD.

BY THE LATE

REV. JAMES HAMILTON, D.D.

LONDON:

JAMES NISBET & CO., 21 BERNERS STREET.

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P R E F A C E.

SOON after the lamented death of the subject of this memoir, a very general desire was expressed by those who knew him, that some record of his life and character should be given to the Church. It was felt that, notwithstanding the profound humility which distinguished the man, and which made him shrink from all display, there was that in the sweetness of his disposition, in the tenderness of his Christian sympathies, and in the elegance of his mental culture, which, as developed in his valuable life, it would be right, and might be profitable, to set forth in a short memoir. And although, by the volume of poems and other smaller works which were published in his lifetime, and by his occasional contributions to periodical literature, the name of JAMES D. BURNS had already become most favourably known, there was a strong desire for a sketch of his too brief

career, and for the publication of such poetical and other remains as might take their place with his other works, and might help to perpetuate the memory of one of the most loving and most Christ-like natures that are met with in a lifetime.

The task seemed to fall naturally to one of his friends who had largely possessed his confidence, and to whom it would have been indeed a labour of love. But the incessant toils of a busy London life, and the heavy strain involved in the conduct of large affairs, made it impossible for him to take the principal part of the work.

It was, however, undertaken with characteristic generosity by the beloved and lamented Dr James Hamilton, and his felicitous pen will readily be traced all through the part of this volume comprising the memoir. And we are sure that it will be felt to be doubly precious when it is known that these pages, in which he so lovingly sketched the life of his friend, were the last which he wrote, and were finished during a retirement at Hampstead at the commencement of that illness which, in a few brief months, issued in his own call to the higher service of the sanctuary above.

The concluding part of the volume, in which refer-

ence is made to the character of Mr Burns' poetical writings, as well as the editing of the remains and the preparation of the whole for the press, has devolved upon another hand.

To the many who knew and appreciated Mr Burns' pulpit ministrations, it will, we are sure, be acceptable that a few of his sermons have been inserted at the end, and no apology need be offered for the insertion of such of his fugitive poems and hymns as have previously appeared from time to time in the *Family Treasury*, the *English Presbyterian Messenger*, and other periodicals. To the Messrs Nelson we are indebted for much kindness in permitting the use of hymns and pieces which were their copyright.

With these explanations, which seemed to be called for, the volume is issued with the humble prayer that it may be made a blessing to many, and that the lessons of a life spent in the Master's service may not be without fruit to the glory of His grace.

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M E M O I R.

THE
LIFE OF J. D. BURNS.

CHAPTER I.

EDINBURGH.

THROUGH "The Fortunes of Nigel" every one has made the acquaintance of that opulent goldsmith who, in the days of James I. and Anne of Denmark, so often relieved the wants of royalty; and amongst its many beautiful buildings there is none of which Edinburgh is more justly proud than the pile which, rising betwixt the Castle and Meadows, fills the neighbourhood with a tranquil majesty, whilst perpetuating the kindly name and noble deeds of George Heriot. Suggested by the still grander Christ's Hospital of London, and in its leading features conformed to that princely foundation, it may not exhibit such a roll of illustrious alumni as its far-famed prototype; but within its walls have been educated many hundreds of those who, in honourable callings, have been a credit to their country, whilst an occasional name, like that of Sir Henry Raeburn, has sprung up

to eminence, and left renown to the school and an incentive to youthful successors. Here, upwards of thirty years ago, and in virtue of his privilege as the son of a burgess-freeman of Edinburgh, one of the hundred and eighty boys in residence, was JAMES DRUMMOND BURNS. He had been born at Edinburgh, February 18, 1823. With dark hair, high forehead, and features finely regular, the left eye had lost its sight, and added a shade of sadness to a countenance which, frequent gleams of playfulness notwithstanding, was habitually pensive. Even as a little fellow there was in his air something sober, almost subdued, and he grew bigger without growing boisterous: the diligent, attentive lad whom house-governors love to quote, and who, in a home conscious of no sisterly influence, exerts a gentle and unacknowledged control on wilder companions.

To the Rev. Alexander Rodger, now the esteemed minister of the Free Church at Coldstream, in his own day a distinguished pupil at Heriot's, we are indebted for nearly all our knowledge of those early years. In a long and interesting letter he writes:—
“At a preparatory school he had already made good progress for his years, and those of us who were alongside of him in the class soon found that he had great quickness and ease in learning his lessons. He was a very diligent, well-behaved boy, very very seldom, if ever, found in a fault; not manifesting any special aptitude or liking for any department in particular, but taking a good place in all—English,

French, Latin, Greek, and Mathematics. I may mention one proof of his proficiency. The boys used to be moved from class to class as soon as they were thought fit for advancement to a higher section of the school. When Burns could be little more than twelve years of age, he stood third in the highest class, the boys above him having like himself run too rapidly through the prescribed curriculum, and reached the end of the course two years before the usual time for leaving the school. In these circumstances the governors did what they had never done before, and sent the three boys to the Rector's class in the High School, allowing them still to reside in Heriot's Hospital. Dr Carson was a first-rate scholar, and a most excellent teacher. Of these early years the general impression which abides with me is, that Burns was a kind, quiet boy, thoughtful, grave, more given to reading than to play. As one of his companions has since said to me, 'His nature was as gentle as anything on this earth need be ;' and he was evidently one of those who pass through life incapable (in a sense) of being contaminated by the grossness of this lower sphere."

The disposition which thus early made him so interesting and so exemplary could only have one source; but when or how it was that, under the fostering care of the good Spirit, the seeds of piety sprang up, as in many similar instances, it is now impossible to ascertain. The result, however, seems to have been that his thoughts were early turned towards the Christian

ministry: and, indeed, if it had not occurred to himself, it would have been sure to be suggested to him by others in a country where the pinnacle of ambition, then more even than now, was the pulpit, and where bookish tastes and sober ways point to the manse as their appropriate landing-place.

The Heriot boys attended their parish church, the New Greyfriars. In those days its minister was the Rev. Daniel Wilkie. A lovelier spirit never animated human form, and to those who came near him there was an irresistible fascination in that sweet and gracious tact which made the shiest instantly at home, and which, as when a poor instrument gives out fine music in the hands of a skilful minstrel, from sheepish youths and inexpressive rustics elicited a sense and goodness surprising to themselves. In his daily walk through the Grassmarket it was pleasant to follow this good shepherd and see the love which everywhere attended him. The lint-headed little ones ran after him, for many of them he could call by their names, and on many of them he had laid his hands and, like the Master, blessed them; and when he prayed in a sick-room and went his way, the peace and hope which lingered made the sufferer feel as if he had received an angel visit. Of course, the world was not so good as he saw it; for a radiance went forth from himself and gave a bright side to the darkest things, and his power was mainly personal. In the pulpit as much the man of God as in the family circle or the morning visit—as much and not

more—there were the same tender persuasive tones, the same fatherly affectionate aspect, the same ease of highbred self-possession ; but there was no exertion or enhancement of his faculties. His sermons were therefore tame, except to the few who welcomed them as the weekly outcome of the holy man ; no sparkling thoughts, no happy simile, no rousing appeal, no memorable or original sentiment ; nothing but the most simple truths of Scripture expressed in the most usual way, but with more than usual unction. He himself was quite aware that his sermons were not suited to young men. The writer well remembers the dear man saying to himself, “ Your mother and sisters attend the Greyfriars, and I am always glad to see them ; but it is a pity that you and your brother should come. You are students of theology, and here in Edinburgh you have a fine opportunity to attend the best preachers. Go and hear Mr Bruce and Mr Candlish and the other great guns.”

The Herioters, however, could not go after “ great guns,” and as it was expected in the Sabbath evening class that the older boys should read notes of one of that day’s sermons, we can easily understand how some of them found it a task of difficulty. As recorded by Mr Rodger, “ I remember well how we used to admire and somewhat envy (for he was *facile princeps*) the fulness of Burns’s notes and the sweet flowing elegance of his style. It has often occurred to me since, that he must have made up a good deal of the matter. I strongly suspect that his notes were

somewhat like those which Sir Walter Scott, when a boy, used to give to his father, helped a good deal by the invention of his own brain. Truth to speak, my boyish notion in listening to Burns's productions was that they were a great improvement on the originals from which they professed to be derived." Still, in after years when listening to Mr Burns, we have sometimes thought of Mr Wilkie. The resemblance lay partly in a melodious voice, which, whatsoever might be the theme, was usually touched with tenderness; partly in the absence of gesticulations, the awkward and the elegant alike; and most of all in that beauty of holiness which shines around the preaching and the praying of those who are meek and pure in heart, and who thirst and hunger after righteousness.

In his sixteenth year, (November 1837,) and already furnished with a fair amount of scholarship, Burns was transferred to college as one of Heriot's bursars. Here he was still diligent and attentive, but at first he exhibited no special ardour, either literary or scientific. Latin and Greek were taught by learned men who had lost, if they ever possessed, the power of kindling enthusiasm, and it was hardly to be expected that a youth of seventeen could appreciate the vast erudition, or follow the masterly discussions of Sir William Hamilton. It was in the class for moral philosophy that the dormant energies of our student were fairly awakened. That class was conducted by John Wilson. In some respects an incongruous

successor to Brown, Stewart, Ferguson, in the prodigal exuberance of "Christopher North" there was imported into the old university a prodigious accession of vital force. No doubt he was a humorist, and there was so little distinctively "moral" in the rollicking wit of *Blackwood's Magazine*, that all the learning of the land stood aghast at his appointment; but happy will it be for the new curators if all their nominees do as much to justify their wisdom as Wilson did to redeem the blunder which spirited into the throne of philosophy a magnificent madcap. No "book in breeches," no academical automaton, with parchment face and pedantic tones, grinding forth the same dry formula year by year, he was intensely human; and to young men whose hatred is humdrum, whose delight is truth, courage, mastery, it was a daily rapture when, like a strong man rejoicing to run his race, the splendid luminary rose on their horizon. Rich in fancy, redundant in matter, exulting in prowess, he threw himself at once on his theme as a lion springs on the prey; and in the wonderful improvisation which followed, so profuse was the imagery, so brilliant the diction, so exciting the passion, that dull must have been the clod which did not catch fire, very flat the fish which offered to no fly. Under the inspiration Burns found himself a thinker and a poet. Like many of his companions he rejoiced when the hour of lecture returned, and when under the lead of this Triton they took their daily header into the great ocean of thought. Not that

every diver brought up a pearl, not that every Leander could cross the Hellespont between the real and transcendental ; but even shells and corals have their beauty, and to the brave swimmer a good reward is the broad chest, the brawny arm, the splendid joy of progress through the sparkling wave. Our friend found this recompense. His faculties were stirred ; he produced essays which his class-fellows admired, and, at the end of the session, his name stood on the prize-list as one of the most distinguished students.

“ It was about this time,” writes Mr Rodger, “ that he and one or two others who were his most intimate friends used to meet on the Saturdays for short excursions into the country. There are few things of which I have a happier or more vivid remembrance than those pleasant wanderings out about Braid, Hermitage, &c., and it is with James Burns that the memory of them is almost entirely associated. He was the soul of our little band. He had a keen eye for the beautiful, and how fond he was of guiding us to quiet out-of-the-way nooks, some peaceful streamlet or sequestered dell, where everything seemed in harmony with his gentle unpretentious nature ! Happy ramblings were those for us all ; he used to be so cheery with us, and we were so happy with him. Intelligent and well read in general literature, with his lively interesting talk, his pleasant, hearty laugh, his mild, unassuming manner, we all loved him and looked up to him. He had a keen sense of

the ludicrous too, very ready to notice any little weakness about any of us, any stupid remark or other indication of a prosaic soul, and would occasionally turn the laugh against these things, but never with one particle of bitterness. Indeed, there was not a particle of bitterness in his nature. At once very loveable and very loving, he was endowed with the most refined and exquisite taste. Exalted above all baseness, nothing mean could live in his presence. The soul of honour, and singularly pure in heart and life, his very look frowned down all coarseness and vulgarity, so that from such things his companionship was itself a sufficient security ; and yet his gentleness and unpretentiousness and playfulness made him the favourite with us all."

Four years of literature and philosophy conducted him, in November 1841, to that Theological Hall of which Welsh and Chalmers were the ornaments. Any one who can recal the ministry of Dr Welsh at Crossmichael or St David's, Glasgow, will remember the fine gleams of fancy which lighted every sermon, and the holy chastened earnestness and elevation which breathed through his preaching and his prayers ; and any one who has read his life of Dr Thomas Brown will know that by conformation he was both a metaphysician and poet. With his power of analysis and his picturesque faculty, it might, therefore, have been expected that in the chair of church history he would have reanimated our dry ecclesiastical annals, and made the Christian story

pass along in life-like panorama. But his translation from the pulpit to the professorship took place at that period when imagination begins to fade, and the judicial faculties mature. Add to this, his insight into character and motive was naturally keen, and to an idealist nothing can be more disenchanting than the study of church history, consequently his lectures were by no means romantic. Plain, straightforward, simple, with scarcely a figure of speech; for like the horticultural accuracy which uproots daisies from a modern lawn, his taste, as it grew severe, discarded all ornament; his prelections owed their charm to their large intelligence and lofty tone; the large intelligence which regards a theme in relation to many others; the lofty tone which on fit occasions flowed with generous sympathy or shot devouring flame; whilst a philosophic mournfulness brightened by Christian faith, like Eolian notes in a sunny breeze, drew sympathy towards the speaker.

Chalmers, who had been the political economist in a parochial cure, and the evangelist in a chair of ethics, as professor of theology and trainer of the rising ministry, remained all that he had ever been—sage, prophet, philanthropist, preacher of righteousness. Many-sided, and on every side intense—one day delighting to open up a problem and reduce it to the plainest maxims of common sense; next day seizing hold of a truism and by rapid magic transforming it into the triumphal car which bore a captivated audience up to the third heavens; often preach-

ing to his students, just as in other days he had often prelected to his people; in the most enraptured of his visions retaining his sagacity, and to the tamest details of parochial drudgery bringing the ardour of a devotee; never losing faith in God and the God-given instincts of humanity, and so emerging from frequent failure still buoyant and sanguine; never ceasing to be the Christian, and therefore never fearing to be the economist, the naturalist, the orator; in matter-of-fact more than a match for any Dryasdust, in true idealism outsoaring every day-dreamer; even beyond his splendid expositions of master truths, was the inspiration of his sanctified genius—the trans-fusive power of his large and exhaustless vitality; and whilst every one owned that he was a man whom no other could repeat, the mere spectacle of such moral and intellectual greatness was an experience which could never be forgotten, nor from under such a spell could any susceptible spirit pass away without an enhancement of its powers.

Thus the mental activity displayed in the Moral Philosophy Class was continued in the Divinity Hall, and an essay which Burns read on the Relations between Geology and Religion having drawn from Dr Chalmers expressions of warm admiration, the author thence-forward occupied a prominent position among his classmates, and was the object of a marked regard on the part of the professor. But however much tutors and professors may do in the way of guiding and inspiring, in a college course a material element is the

education which students give to one another. Week by week in regular societies, day by day in little cliques and coteries, they discuss all matters and all men, and prepare that wiser world which is to supersede the present. With his pleasant dispositions Burns had many friends, and from time to time he was an active member of various societies. In one of these, sermons were read and criticised ; in another, questions of theology or ecclesiastical policy were discussed. Of each of these Mr Burns was an active member—in the one a fair and generous critic, in the other a skilful but not passionate debater. The chief advantage was that he became an excellent speaker. For the highest popularity, broad humour, melting pathos, fervid enthusiasm, or fierce invective is required. None of these were possessed or simulated by the subject of this biography, but at college he acquired and perfected that style which made his addresses at public meetings so delightful—thoughts neither paradoxical nor commonplace conveyed in graceful language, here and there irradiated by a welcome sparkle of playfulness, and with frequent images of exceeding beauty.

His first two winters in the Hall were the last of the “Ten Years’ Conflict,” and the summer of 1843 saw the Church of Scotland torn in twain. Mr Burns had not the temperament which makes an eager partizan, but he had the convictions which leave no choice, and casting in his lot with the Free Church, when the month of November sent some of his

class-mates back to the old haunts, he followed to the New College his old professors, now reinforced by Drs Cunningham, Bannerman, and Duncan. By such instructors he profited above many his equals, and he was looking forward to various alternatives for prolonging his ministerial training, when near the close of his fourth and final session an incident occurred which ushered him at once on the responsibilities and labours of the actual pastorate.

It was a Saturday morning early in 1845, when Mr Burns and two friends met by appointment at the College, and were just setting forth on an excursion which they had arranged, when Dr Chalmers's janitor told Mr Burns that the doctor wanted to see him. Begging his friends to wait, as he would come back directly, he followed the messenger. His companions waited till they were thoroughly weary, and when at last he came out it was with a sad and anxious countenance. At that time probationers were scarce, and, despairing of a minister, the Free Church congregation at Dunblane had sent to ask Dr Chalmers if amongst his students he could find suitable supply.* The doctor at once named Mr Burns, and in this interview told what he had done, and in-

* Of this deputation, Mr Robertson, now rector of the High School of Inverness, was a member. In a letter to him, Dr Chalmers says, "Give my best regards to the other members of the deputation who accompanied you. Since they left I have examined all that I had recorded in my class-books of Mr Burns, and I can assure you and the other gentlemen that he stands in the very highest rank among the most promising of my students."

sisted on Mr Burns going that day in order to preach on the morrow. Of course, there was an end of the excursion; but when he returned on the Monday, and the same friends met him, his downcast dispirited look plainly betokened that something was wrong. According to his own account, he had “stuck” in his forenoon discourse—every idea fled from him, and unable to resume, he had dismissed the congregation. He admitted that the afternoon service was more successful, but it could not console him for the breakdown of the morning, and, mortified out of measure, he had stolen away early in the morning, so as to avoid meeting any of the people. But possibly his own feelings had exaggerated the failure; at all events, his hearers were men of a discerning spirit; for thoroughly persuaded that he was a man rarely gifted, as well as a man of God, they were determined to secure the young and modest preacher as their minister. They sent a large deputation, begging Dr Chalmers to urge their claim and use his influence so as to obtain for Mr Burns an early licence. The upshot was, that forced to relinquish all projects of further study, without even such slight preparation as is implied in a few months of occasional preaching, Mr Burns passed at a single step from his bench in the Divinity Hall to the Free Church pulpit in Dunblane.*

* One of Mr Burns' early friends, with whom he kept up a cordial intimacy, was Mr Carmichael, of the High School of Edinburgh. A loving tribute to his memory, from Mr Carmichael's pen, appeared at the time of his death.

CHAPTER II.

DUNBLANE.

ON the banks of the beautiful Allan, sheltered from east winds by the Ochils, and facing towards those mountains which throw their solemn grandeur over the Trosachs, Dunblane is such a village as an invalid might prize for its mild and tranquil atmosphere, whilst its manifold attractions cannot fail to lay hold of any mind open to nature's loveliness. The spell is enhanced by the old world memories which surround it. At Sheriffmuir came off the battle between the Marquis of Argyll and the Earl of Mar, which helped to settle on the throne the House of Hanover. The cathedral carries the thoughts of the antiquary back to a time anterior to the Norman Conquest; but among all its bishops, from Blaanus downward, the name on which devotion loves best to dwell is Robert Leighton. A dull stone building still retains in sorry order the remnants of his library; and it was in this very air and amidst this very scenery that he composed those works of which Robert Hall has said, “The reading them is a truce to all human cares and human passions, like

lying down in green pastures and by the side of still waters."

To such influences Mr Burns was keenly alive, and had he possessed sufficient leisure, life in such a place would have been an exquisite enjoyment. And so it often was: for there could not fail to come quiet intervals in the midst of habitual engagements; but as a rule his ministry here was unbroken occupation.

For recollections of that period we are indebted to a friend,* who was very young when he first made Mr Burns's acquaintance, having for some time enjoyed his instructions as a classical tutor. Reverting to their earliest intercourse, Mr Anderson writes: "I well remember the admiration I soon conceived for his rare gifts and accomplishments, and the boyish enthusiasm with which I regarded one who was so richly endowed, and so much my senior, yet admitted me to the privilege of a confidential friendship. But the most vivid impression which I recal is that produced by his gentle, pure, and withal noble Christian character. For beyond that dignity of a naturally refined and exalted mind, which commanded an unfailing respect; beyond the gentleness, genial sympathy, and warmth of heart which took so deep a hold of the affections; beyond the fascination of his conversation, so easy, playful, and graceful, and marked by such originality of thought and extent of information; beyond all these one ever felt the hidden

* The Rev. John A. Anderson, minister of the Free Church, Collessie.

grace of an earnest, unobtrusive, but deep-flowing piety. I like to recall this early impression, because throughout long years of intimacy no circumstance ever emerged which abated it in the least degree, or jarred with it for a single moment; one heard no discord in the pleasant music of his life.

“Having been much with him at the time when he was called to Dunblane,” adds Mr Anderson, “I think I can say the prevailing feeling in his mind was that the hand of the Lord was upon him. There was no elation on account of an early success. On the other hand, though the feeling of reluctance, from the conviction of his inexperience, and his being but imperfectly furnished for the ministry, which almost made him decline the first request to preach at Dunblane, followed him still, and the thought of the responsibility laid upon him hung over him, as he said, like a shadow, yet there was no hesitation as to the step he ought to take. He humbly took the path which the finger of God had traced for him. He was ordained in the month of August 1845; and I shall only add, that from the time of his ordination the cloud seemed to melt away, and his spirit arose buoyant, as with his whole heart he entered into the work.

“It was a trying time to a Free Church minister when Mr Burns was settled in Dunblane. The Disruption was but a recent event, and the demands of an extraordinary kind which the Church made on the time and strength of her ministers were very

frequent. The Presbytery of Dunblane was in a crippled state. The brethren able for work had often a heavy burden to bear. Mr Burns's letters of this period speak of incessant calls from home. Yet his own congregation never suffered; week-day and Sabbath found him at his post. He never preached without giving evidence of most careful preparation in his sermons, which from the first were marked by that clearness of statement, felicity and beauty of illustration, and the pathos with which they appealed to the feelings, which marked his pulpit ministrations to the end. His exertions in the private walks of pastoral life, especially in visiting the sick, household expositions of Scripture, carried on in winter evenings—a kind of work peculiarly trying to one of his physical constitution—were such as sometimes to call forth the remonstrances of his friends as labours too abundant. His favourite recreation at all times was poetry, but even for this, though a fugitive piece flowed ever and anon from his pen, he reserved but little time at the beginning of his ministry. And he took no rest, not even a clerical furlough of the briefest kind. The only holiday I remember his taking before his health broke down, was in the summer of 1846, when he and I made a pedestrian excursion through a part of the Perthshire Highlands. But even then he was absent but a single Sabbath from the pulpit, and on that Sabbath had full ministerial duty to do in the little church of Ardeonaig on the banks of Loch Tay. His laborious exertions

seemed never to occasion any mental strain. His mind was ever fresh and elastic; and as his heart was cheered by many signs of usefulness, the result, sometimes of his preaching, sometimes of the word of tender counsel spoken at the sick-bed, his ministry was becoming increasingly a source of pleasure to him. But the effect on the bodily frame soon became apparent. I find, in a letter dated December 4, 1846, that already he had begun to have warnings of the attack which was soon again to change the current of his life. He writes: 'I have been led to dwell more habitually on such contemplations for some time past, not only from having been brought more frequently into contact with death, but also from having experienced to some extent a recurrence of former sensations which bring along with them the impression that it behoves *me* very particularly to be "always ready."'"

The symptoms which awakened his own apprehensions returned on every exertion, and it became too evident that if his labours were not lightened he would be laid aside altogether. In June 1847 he paid a visit to Westmoreland, and spent some weeks at Grasmere, in a house which, to him, was interesting, as having been the residence, for seven years, of his favourite poet Wordsworth, and afterwards of De Quincey. He enjoyed the scenery and the associations of the place; but, as the dulness in his right lung continued, his medical advisers urged him to accept an invitation from the Free Church Colonial

Committee to take charge of its congregation in Madeira during winter. The offer was kind and opportune, and at last he agreed to go. Both to his people and himself it was a solemn and affecting step. Two years had been quite sufficient to create a strong attachment between a warm-hearted people and their devoted and still youthful minister, and they understood too well what all might be implied in a voyage to Madeira. Still there was room for hope. He fully realised his own position, and nothing could show more strikingly the simplicity of his faith than his calm, his cheerful acquiescence in the will of God. Not only was there no repining; there was scarcely any perceptible depression of his spirits, not even surprise at the arrest of his projects. "God's work can be as well done by the sickness, or even by the death of his servants, as by their activity," a sentiment which he expressed to a friend, seemed to keep his mind in perfect peace. Even the pain of parting was mitigated by the hurry of preparation as well as the permissible hope of return. On the 23rd of August he wrote to Mr Anderson:—

"I have delayed to answer your letter till I find myself on the very eve of departure. I am at present all confusion, bustle, anxiety, and uncertainty. The vessel by which I propose to take my passage is advertised to sail on September 1st, from Greenock; though I am not sure yet but that I may be compelled to sail from the Thames. My preparations are as yet in a very rude and chaotic state. I

leave Dunblane on Wednesday for Glasgow, and though I would like to be in Edinburgh before I go, I know not when or for how long a time it may be. The vessel sails somewhat earlier than I had expected, and this has hurried my departure in a very disagreeable manner.

“ I preached yesterday twice, and was much strengthened, particularly when I attempted to bid my people *farewell* for a season. I try to think it is only to be for a short time ; but the sense of the uncertainty which this step casts over the whole period of my future ministry, solemnises me much ; and the more nearly the time of my embarkation approaches, I feel the more disposed to shrink from taking the decisive step of separating myself from my beloved flock. Their attachment has never affected me so deeply and painfully as within these few weeks. May the Lord grant that all the things that have happened and may happen to me may turn out rather for the furtherance of the gospel ! My health is much as it was, and I feel greatly encouraged and upheld by the thought that, as this matter seems to have been of the Lord’s ordaining, He will concern Himself in its future issues, and make it the means, in some way or other, of glorifying Himself ; and if He is glorified, even if it should be at the expense of us poor frail and feeble instruments, who will dare to say that He hath not done all things well ?”

CHAPTER III.

MADEIRA.—FIRST WINTER.

SHORTLY before Mr Burns's visit to Madeira very interesting events had occurred in that island. Through the faithful and long-continued labours of Dr Kalley, followed up by the preaching of Mr Hewitson, and aided by Christian residents from this country, a remarkable religious awakening had commenced among the Portuguese, and spread so wide that the priesthood, filled with fury, set in motion the whole machinery of persecution. Numbers were thrown into prison. A poor woman, named Maria Joaquina, was condemned to death for denying the doctrine of transubstantiation, and was only saved from the flames by the intervention of the British Government. Dr Kalley and other Protestants with difficulty escaped from a lawless rabble and the hostile authorities, and left the island; and eight hundred of the converts, seeking freedom to worship God, became voluntary exiles, and in successive detachments sailed for Trinidad.* At the time of Mr Burns's arrival it was

* All the details of this remarkable movement will be familiar to the readers of the Memoir of the Rev. W. H. Hewitson, by the Rev. John Baillie.

impossible to resume evangelistic operations among the natives, and some families from this country who would have formed most desirable members of his own congregation, the recent outrages prevented from returning.

Mr Burns left Greenock on board the *Dalhousie*, September 7, 1847, and anchored in Funchal Roads, on Tuesday, September 21. Two months afterwards, whilst his impressions still were recent, he thus writes to Mr Anderson; the date is November 27.

“ The weather was very warm when I landed, and continued to be so for some weeks. However, the only effect it produced in me was a feeling of extreme relaxation; and for that matter, the heat has been as great for the last few days as it was then. Soon after my arrival I had myself examined by Dr Miller, an old Kilmarnock friend of mine, under whose hospitable roof I resided till I procured the apartments which I now occupy. He is one of the elders of my congregation, and a very pious man. His wife is a sister of Dr Kalley, whose labours here were so much blessed. Dr Miller’s opinion of my case was on the whole more favourable than that of the physician I consulted in Glasgow, who seemed to think that my best course was to give up preaching altogether. Dr Miller thought that, under certain prudent restrictions, I might continue to preach. With this view of the case, you may be sure my own private inclinations entirely coincided, and accordingly, since this month commenced, I have ventured to preach regu-

larly twice a day, without being sensible of any injurious consequences.

“ As you may well believe, my congregation is composed of a mixed multitude—a sort of Evangelical Christendom in miniature. I am on the best possible terms with many members of the Established Church, and I number some of the Plymouth Brethren among my most valued friends. I am not conscious of having been more led to deprecate points of difference since I came here, but I *am* conscious of having been more led to appreciate points of unity. When I see around me the miserable effects of the despotism and false doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church, by which every day God is dishonoured and men’s souls are destroyed, I am more deeply sensible of the Scriptural weight and value of that article of the Apostles’ Creed, ‘ I believe in the Holy Catholic Church, which is the communion of Saints.’ (By way of criticism let me here remark that it is erroneous to read this as two articles, though it is commonly printed as two. The Holy Catholic Church is not one thing and the Communion of Saints another, but both are one.) We meet in the forenoon at eleven, and in the afternoon at half-past three. Our place of meeting is an upper room in the Carreira, the principal street of Funchal. It is commodious and airy, an indispensable requisite in this climate; but it has its inconveniences. You have often read how the Sabbath is observed in Popish countries. Being close upon the street, we come in for

our fair share of all the noise and merriment that passes. All the popular Portuguese waltzes of the day are whistled by the boys and sung by the men ; and only last Sunday a few young gentlemen, stationed a few paces off, amused themselves by firing a musket at irregular intervals during the whole of my discourse. I have also a prayer-meeting every Thursday from twelve to one, though it is not much better attended than such meetings generally are.

“ From the members of my congregation without exception I have received all the marks of kindness and regard which a minister has any right to expect, and with some I have as favourable and pleasant opportunities of Christian intercourse as I have ever enjoyed in my life. As I think it was the Lord who placed me here, I feel that I am warranted to pray that He will bless my ministry, and I am not without hope that I shall be enabled to be useful to some who are seeking the way to Zion, as well as to a few who have not yet turned their faces thitherward. I have no reason to expect that my ministry will be a long one ; indeed, I have every reason to expect the contrary ; the more reason that I should seek grace to improve present opportunities, and the more thankful I should be, if stationed in this solitary and advanced outpost of Christendom, I have strength given me to display a banner because of truth. Looking back upon the events of these few months, I can yet scarcely resist the impression that they have happened to me in a dream. I have not yet recovered

from my surprise at the suddenness of my translation from Dunblane to Funchal. For the last few years of my life, indeed, I have experienced nothing but a succession of such things. I found myself minister of Dunblane before I was well conscious that I had left the Divinity Hall ; and here I am among a people of a strange speech, a few score leagues from the empire of Morocco, when but a few Sabbaths since I was preaching in Scotland. The lesson that I should have learned from these vicissitudes surely is, that here I have no continuing city ; the rest for which I should have learned to look is surely not on this side the grave.

“ No words of mine can convey any idea of the bewitching beauty of this climate, the softness of the air, the blueness of the sky, the clearness of the atmosphere, or the surpassing brilliancy and splendour of these moonlit nights. But the richness and luxuriance of the vegetation is, perhaps, the thing that most strikes one. Almost all the productions of tropical climates flourish here. One sees on all sides strange plants and trees, the very names of which bring back the “ Arabian Nights ” and Indian voyages, which we have read long ago. This year the orange-trees are loaded with fruit, which is now fast ripening, and under the bright sun, which continually shines, the whole face of nature is literally illuminated with the rich lustrous glow of their large golden globes. In one sense, one can hardly help fearing that this must have an injurious effect upon

invalids. It makes them more in love with life—more reluctant to leave a world which contains in it scenes so exquisitely lovely.

“ I am not sure whether or not Mrs Anderson is acquainted with Mr and Mrs B—— D——. They are both here this winter on account of Mrs D——’s health. I see them very frequently. Mrs D—— is very delicate, and evidently slowly sinking under her disease. There is now no hope of her recovery. Her illness commenced only last April, and has been fearfully rapid. My intercourse with them, particularly with Mrs D——, has been very pleasant. She is quite conscious of her situation, remarkably patient and submissive under all her sufferings, and in a state of mind in which, distrusting herself and endeavouring to place all her reliance on the blood of the atonement, she seems growing in meetness for her solemn change.”

The ship which brought Mr Burns from Greenock to Madeira was chartered to convey three hundred Protestant emigrants from Funchal to Trinidad. Before she sailed Mr Burns went repeatedly on board to see to the comfort of the passengers, and to drop a few words of friendly cheer and counsel. They were delighted with the liberty of worship enjoyed on the “ free soil ” of a British merchantman, and on their last morning in the Roads, as early as four o’clock, and whilst it still was dark, their fellow-voyagers overheard the voice of their psalmody. To this and other incidents Mr Burns alludes in a pastoral letter,

which, on the 28th of October, he addressed to his people at Dunblane:—

“ MY DEAR FRIENDS,—It now seems a long time since I parted from you, but not a day passes in which the thought of you is not frequently present to my mind, and in which I do not seek that the Lord may bless all your families, and pour out His spirit abundantly upon you as a congregation. I can now sympathise much more than formerly with those portions of the epistles of holy Paul, in which he expresses his earnest and inexpressible longings to hear of the spiritual welfare of Churches which he had been honoured to plant, but from which God had separated him, and though I have no Tychicus whom I can send ‘ that ye might know our affairs, and that he might comfort your hearts,’ and can hope for no Timotheus ‘ to come from you unto us, and to bring us good tidings of your faith and charity, and to tell us that you have good remembrance of us, always desiring greatly to see us, as we also to see you.’ Yet this only increases my desire to know how the Lord has been dealing with you since my departure, and gives greater urgency to my prayers, that the consolations of His blessed Spirit may be made to abound towards you. I think that I can say without presumption, in the words of the apostle to the believers at Philippi, ‘ God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ. And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment;

that ye may approve things that are excellent ; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ ; being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.

“ It has just occurred to me, (and on turning to my private Register I find that I am right in my recollection,) that on this very day last year, and exactly at this time in the evening, I was addressing you on the alarming and awakening aspect of God’s dealings with our sinful nation. The day had been set apart as a day of solemn humiliation and prayer, on account of the solemn aspect of providences with which we had been visited, and our prayer-meeting in the evening was conducted with special reference to the same memorable events. How little did you think this day twelvemonths—how little, my dear friends, did I think—that in the short compass of a single year we were to be separated so far ! and oh, will we not be blind indeed, yea, criminally and wilfully blind, if we do not see, in the things which have happened in this little interval, the solemn dealing of the Lord with us as a congregation ! If we do not hear in them the Lord’s warning and awakening voice to you as people, to me as pastor, to consider how little privileges have been valued, and opportunities improved, shall we not be chargeable with shutting our ears and hardening our hearts as in a day of provocation ? I cannot preach to you now with the living voice, but I can remind you of these things and

beseech you to consider them. I feel them very awakening to my own soul, and if, by the blessing of God's Spirit, the mention of them does lead any of you earnestly to seek after the things of salvation, it will be a more powerful sermon than any that has ever been addressed to you by human lips. But, blessed be God ! though I can no longer preach to you, yet I can pray for you, and my prayer is, that those among you in whom God hath begun a good work may be strengthened with more abundant might by his Spirit in the inner man, that they may be rooted and grounded in the love of a Saviour dwelling in their hearts by faith ; and that those who are resting satisfied with a mere name to live may be effectually convinced of sin, awakened from their security, led to turn to the Gospel stronghold, so that in the day when 'He that shall come' does come, they may be found 'not of those who draw back to perdition ;' but of those who 'believe to the saving of the soul.'

"I am happy to say, that since my arrival in this genial climate, I think my health decidedly improved. The Lord has dealt very graciously with me in fitting me for necessary duty, and giving me strength according to my day. The heat is still very great, so much so as to make any exertion in the middle of the day difficult and unsafe. To-day it has been as warm as any day was last June in Scotland, and were it not for the cool fresh breeze which blows almost constantly from the sea, the heat would be very oppressive.

"About three weeks ago three hundred natives of

the island, chiefly Protestants, left as emigrants for Trinidad by the vessel in which I came out. The day before they sailed I went on board with my friend Dr Miller, one of the elders of our Presbyterian Church, and addressed them in a few words which he interpreted. Their thankfulness for the liberty they enjoyed in the ship of worshipping God, was very affecting. In their own houses they were not allowed to meet for religious conversation or prayer ; the eye of the persecutor was constantly on them ; such meetings required to be held with the greatest possible secrecy under cloud of night, and in remote and unsuspected localities. To read the word of God was to commit a crime ; to sing God's praise was to expose themselves to insult and outrage on the part of reckless and desperate men. But now in the vessel and under the British flag they had nothing to fear—they could sing, read, and pray. A pious Scotch-woman who was in the vessel on the way to Trinidad, told me that the first morning after they came on board, she was awakened at four o'clock with the joyful noise of their morning hymn. With their voices they were preventing the dawning of the day, and though she did not understand their language, yet, knowing that they were songs of Sion which they sung, she rejoiced, because she felt that they were one in Him in whom there is neither Jew nor Greek, barbarian, Scythian, bond or free ! How sad to think of the guilt of those by whom these emigrants were forced to flee from the land of their birth. Madeira, like

Jerusalem, has not known the day of her visitation—she has driven Christ from her little gates, and quenched the light which was beginning to burn clearly and to illuminate the darkness of centuries of superstition. Doubtless God has reserved to Himself a remnant, but it must be a very small one. There is still a holy seed from which God may at any time revive His work, as in the case of a ‘teil tree and oak whose substance is in them when they cast their leaves,’ (Isa. vi. 13;) but it is to be feared that a people who have sinned so wilfully, and joined themselves so desperately to their idols, will yet be visited with terrible judgment. The time may come soon and suddenly when this fair but guilty island shall awake too late to a sense of infatuation, and under the sore inflictions of God’s righteous wrath, bitterly deplore the day when blindly and recklessly she drove the best and holiest of her children from her shores. Popery is again triumphant—she rejoices in thinking that she crushed the heresy and riveted her fetters more firmly round the neck of this degraded people. This is certainly an hour in which she can hardly repress her exultation; she has usurped Tahiti, and retained Madeira, which she seemed on the point of losing, and she is flushed with the hope of recovering Great Britain. The deadly wound given to the beast at the Reformation seems now nearly healed, and she hopes, if she does not boast, that by the end of the nineteenth century Europe will be brought back to the position in which it was at the end of the

fifteenth. Be it so—let it be our consolation that ‘the Lord reigneth,’ that ‘He who sitteth in heaven laughs’ at such delusive hopes, that the Lord has them in derision; that He is calmly awaiting the appointed time; that the sword which gave the beast the former wound is still as sharp and glittering, and that, when next it is uplifted to strike, it will wound not the heel only, but also the heart and the head.

“ In the meantime God has been showing even here by terrible things in righteousness that He will not always keep silence and suffer His cause to be trampled underfoot, but ‘that the arms of the wicked shall be broken,’ and the faces of persecutors filled with shame. It is a striking fact that many of those who a few years ago made use of their influence and power to persecute the cause of God and oppose the progress of the gospel, are now either dead or in disgrace, and it has been noticed by the Portuguese themselves that some of them had not ‘died the common death of all men.’ There was something peculiarly affecting, and, to my mind, solemnising, in the circumstances in which a priest who held an office of dignity in the Church died only last week. The man was canon in the Cathedral. He had distinguished himself as a relentless persecutor of the poor Protestants. He was looked upon as the instigator of many of the secret assaults and outrages which were committed upon them, and on one memorable occasion he had actually headed a mob of ruffians who, in open day, and that day a Sabbath,

broke into the house of some pious ladies, who had allowed a few of the converts from Popery to meet under their roof for prayer and reading the Scriptures, and uttered fearful threats against them. It was only in August last year that this man was thus acting in all his insolence and pride, but God was preparing to give him a sudden and memorable overthrow. In the course of last spring, in consequence of certain political charges which were brought against him, as well as for his share in this infamous outrage, he was apprehended and put in prison. His imprisonment soon began to tell upon him, he began to languish and droop, and a visible change came over him. He looked like a man on whom God had set His seal ; and men pointed the finger at him in wonder as they passed him in the street. He was allowed for the sake of his health to go out of the prison occasionally, accompanied by a guard. He was out on Sabbath week, and to appearance not worse than usual, but on the evening of that day he was suddenly seized with terrible convulsions. Before there wastime to administer to him the last sacraments of the Church, he had died in fearful agony, mingling blasphemies with his shrieks. This man died as he had lived, his life had been one of wickedness and vice, and his immoralities were notorious ; yet having been respectably connected, and thus possessed of influence, he retained his office in the Church. I saw his body borne in state from the Cathedral to the grave. Surpliced priests walked before him muttering use-

less prayers, and a long train of white-robed choristers chanted psalms. The crucifix was borne aloft in front, and clouds of incense went up into the air. The body lay upon an open bier, exposed to view, its cheeks painted red to disguise the hollow ghastliness of death, its hand clasped upon and grasping a crucifix, and a magnificent pall thrown over it, while behind the bier his brother canons walked in their stiff, gold-embroidered robes. But he was followed to the grave with popular execrations, which all this pomp and bravery could not quell. While the Church laid the body of her beloved son in consecrated ground, and honoured his ashes with many masses for the repose of his sinful soul, it was whispered among the people that his death was not in the common course of nature; that, fearing a speedy exposure of his many crimes, he had laid hands upon himself, and thus removed himself, by a last and crowning deed of infamy, beyond the reach of all earthly tribunals. He was buried not far from the house which had been the scene of his outrage; and that afternoon, as Dr Miller and I rode past the sepulchre and reflected on the stroke which had removed this man so suddenly in the midst of his sins, I could not help exclaiming, 'I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay-tree, yet he passed away, and lo, he was not: yea, I sought him, but he could not be found. The transgressors shall be destroyed together, and the end of the wicked shall be cut off.'

"It is on the Lord's day that I more particularly feel

that we are now sojourning in Mesech and dwelling in the tents of Kedar. There is indeed little to distinguish the holy Sabbath from any other day. In the morning, from four to eight o'clock, the people flock to mass, and the churches are open; but no discourse is preached, no instruction communicated by the priests. After they have attended mass they consider that they have testified sufficient respect to the Lord of the Sabbath, and spend the rest of the day either in worldly business or in sinful pleasures. In the city, among the higher classes, the principal occupations of the day are card-playing and music parties. The sound of military music hardly ever ceases on the Sabbath. Last Lord's day the election of members of the town-council was going on in the churches, and then the day was wantonly and flagrantly desecrated, the priests acting as polling-clerks. Oh, my dear brethren, you know not how great your privilege is in having been born in a land of light, of Bibles, of Sabbaths, of liberty of conscience, till you have been in a land like this, where Satan's seat is, where 'Our Lady' is heard incessantly, 'Our Lord' almost never, where priests have taken away the key of knowledge, and the Bible is a book sealed with seven seals. And yet, will not many of these once-blinded Madeirenses rise up in the judgment against the men of Scotland and condemn them?

"But I must draw to a close. I cannot tell how much consolation I derived from the thought that there are some of you who frequently remember your

absent minister at a throne of grace. If I am to be restored to you again, as I earnestly trust I soon may, it will be in answer to prayers. There are many difficulties and discouragements connected with this sphere of labour ; for the darkness of a Popish land affects even those who have even a purer profession, and are living in the midst of it ; but pray for me, that when my heart is overwhelmed I may be led unto the Rock that is higher than I, and that the Lord may yet make us glad according to the days wherein He has afflicted us, and the years wherein we have seen evil. May God abundantly bless the labours of His young servant who supplies my place, and watches for your souls. In the result of his labours may that saying be true, ‘One soweth, and another reapeth.’ Now God himself, and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way unto you, and the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one towards another, and the Lord of peace Himself give you peace always by all means.—The Lord be with you all.—Your unworthy, but affectionate pastor,

“ JAMES D. BURNS.”

As a companion of his solitude Mr Burns had brought out a blank-paper volume, and 329 pages of it are filled with entries which he daily made during that first winter in Madeira. It records the visits which he paid to numerous invalids, some of them not connected with his own congregation, and to many of whom his tender and sympathetic ministrations

tions were greatly blessed ; and interspersed with descriptions of floods and storms, and far more frequently days of enchantment followed by magnificent sunsets and magical moonlight ; it details the work of the winepress, the ways of the fishermen, and all the peculiarities of life in the island. So minute are the accounts of ecclesiastical *fêtes* and processions, with their strange mixture of mirth and mummery, that we cannot help thinking that some ulterior use must have been intended in the way of exposing the extravagances of Mariolatry, with its concomitants in Madeira—an ignorant populace and an immoral priesthood ; but by far the most interesting passages are those which reveal the workings of his own mind amidst circumstances of which he felt the full solemnity. Not that he was habitually dejected ; for not only was there “the well of water springing up unto everlasting life,” but there was still good hope of better health, and besides the exhilarating consciousness of useful labour, he had some leisure for the literary recreations which Dunblane had interrupted. We venture a few extracts from this volume. They will help to make the reader at home with the lonely sojourner in the Rue do Castanheiro.

“Monday, November 15, 1847.—Reading Sir James Mackintosh’s life this forenoon. It is very interesting, full of original observations on men and books, and abounding in masterly delineations of character, and quiet scholarlike reflections of a shrewd philosophy. It might seem presumptuous in me to aspire

to measure lances with such a *Front-de-Bœuf* of an antagonist; but some of his speculations on the immortality of the soul (vol. ii. pp. 120–123), I think exceedingly loose and pernicious; nor would it be difficult to expose the lurking fallacy. I must confess the book does not give me that favourable opinion of Sir James's character which I was quite prepared to receive. I cannot *now* think him a *great* man, and it is melancholy to have so many evidences of his being an irreligious man. His life is a record of magnificent projects and stupendous indolence. Even the works which he published are only prospectuses, showing what he might have done and meant to do.

“ *Thursday, November 18.*—Affixed to the walls of the Mount Church saw the electoral lists of the parish; the name of each householder being given, his age, occupation, rental, and literary qualification. There were about forty names. Of these more than thirty were marked on the register as having no literary qualification whatever—‘nadas,’ ‘none,’—which, I suppose, meant that they were able neither to read nor write. Some five or six were marked as having the first or lowest qualification—‘primiera instrucao,’—which, I suppose, means that they were able to read; and only at one name did there appear a higher mark—‘sec. instr.,’—and that the name of the ‘vigario’ of the parish, who, I suppose, adds writing to his reading. Most of them were men upwards of forty. What a deplorable view of the ignorance which Popery shakes from her wings like

a pestilence wherever that bird of evil omen alights ! Dear Scotland, 'stern and wild' as thou art, I felt my heart beat with a warm thrill of love to thee. That fatal 'nadas' could not, I believe, be affixed to the name of a single being above the age of twenty in the parish of Dunblane.

"*Monday, December 6.*—To-day, in reading a Portuguese literary periodical, called 'O Panorama,' I met with an anecdote of David Hume, which I do not remember to have seen before. Hume was crossing the marshy ground that then lay between the Old Town of Edinburgh and the New. One of the planks proved treacherous, and he sank into the mud. Seeing a woman some way off, he bawled out lustily for help. She hastened to his assistance, but as soon as she discovered that it was Hume, she turned to leave him, saying it was wrong to show any countenance to an atheist. 'I am no atheist, my good woman,' said the sinking philosopher in a lugubrious tone. 'If you are not, give me a proof of it by repeating the creed this very moment, or I leave you.' Hume looked piteously round, but nobody was near ; looked again to his inquisitor, but saw at a glance that she was inexorable. He had no alternative ; he began the obnoxious symbol, and with some difficulty got through it, and no sooner had he pronounced 'Amen,' than his companion effected his extrication, leaving the philosopher, as he proceeded homeward, to digest the recantation as best he might. I see nothing intrinsically improbable in the anecdote.

There was no Mound in those days, and the place is described accurately enough as ‘una ponte provisoria sobre am sitio pantanon, que divide a cidade neva da cidade velha em Edinborgo.’*

“*Sabbath, December 12.* — This morning was bright, and sparkling with yesterday’s rain. This being our communion Sabbath, I preached from Ps. cx. 7, and afterwards dispensed the sacrament to about fifty persons. There was, of course, only one table, and in consequence of the length of the service there was no meeting in the afternoon. All was over by half-past one. I felt it a solemn and refreshing season, and had reason to bless the Lord who stood by me, and strengthened me to speak, that all the people might hear. ‘My soul, wait thou only upon God ; for my expectation is from him.’

“*Sabbath, December 19.*—Preached forenoon and afternoon from John xiv. 6, ‘I am the life.’ Able to speak to-day with some freedom and comfort, and the congregation seemed as usual very attentive, but looking back upon the services of the day, how defective, how unworthy do my endeavours towards

* This anecdote has some interest as a specimen of the literary fare presented to the readers of Portuguese periodicals ; but it may be permissible to entertain a different opinion as to its intrinsic probability from that of Mr Burns. Hume did not pass in Edinburgh society for an atheist, and was courted in certain clerical circles, where, if the religion was lukewarm, propriety itself would have put atheism under a ban. Hume neither called himself an atheist nor believed himself to be such, although his philosophical principles, if they lead to anything, lead to atheism. He was, besides, quite unknown to the populace.

the spiritual benefit of my hearers seem even to myself. This is a reflection that often pursues me into my Sabbath evening retirement, and embitters hours that should be given to peaceful meditation and prayer. I think the longer I am a minister, the more urgent and painful is the sense of inadequate discharge of duty becoming. Is this a healthy or an evil symptom? I fear it proceeds to a great extent from pride; from a desire to acquit myself well before men; from an overweening conceit of my own abilities, as if I do not preach so well as I might. At the same time, I think I grow in the sense of ministerial responsibility, and in the feeling of my personal insufficiency for this holy work. If then my services seem so poor, so imperfect even to me, how must they appear in the eyes of the holy God! Considering what a solemn message I am intrusted with, whose message that is, and to whom the message is addressed, how indefinitely short of the standard of ordinary ministerial attainment and devotedness have I fallen! And now the best part of my blighted life is over; the seeds of mortal disease seem to be ripening; preaching in Madeira is surely preaching in the very vestibule of the grave, in the ante-chamber of the eternal world. What a call, O my soul, to the instant and unreserved consecration of all thy powers during the numbered days of thine earthly existence, to this the noblest of all earthly vocations! Thou art weak, but He is strong. Thy word is weak, but

His word which thou speakest, is a sharp two-edged sword. Thine is an earthen vessel, but the Gospel treasure has been poured into it, that the excellency of the power may be seen to be of God and not of man. This thing have I desired of the Lord: that will I seek after; that even here I may be permitted to have some seals of my apostleship.

“Sabbath, December 26.——This the last Sabbath of the year, let me look back upon its course and consider how its Sabbaths have been spent. Up to the end of May, when I was attacked by the illness which brought me to Madeira, the *amount* of ministerial duty I undertook on the Sabbath was extremely imprudent; and yet with how little complacency can I now review it. At the very utmost all that I can do is to pray that its deficiencies may be pardoned. I feel some pleasure in looking back upon the hours spent in my Sabbath classes, and some hopeful symptoms manifested there; but with shame and confusion of face must reflect upon the feebleness, indifference, prayerlessness, and the consequent inefficiency of my pulpit ministrations. How often have my fancied facility of composition, my fancied fluency of extemporaneous expression, and habits of excursive superficial thought, betrayed me into serving the Lord with that which cost me nothing! How often have I presumptuously approached His altar, and with untrembling hand laid on it that which was torn, and the lame and the blind! How have I robbed God of the time which ought to

have been consecrated to His service, and appropriated it, if not to the frivolities of the world, to which neither my inclinations nor my circumstances lead me, to the pursuits of literature, my passionate taste for which I fear is incompatible with the fulness and completeness of my devotedness to my sacred calling. People have thought me laborious and diligent; perhaps I myself fancied that I was so; but alas! mere laboriousness is not faithfulness; it does not imply a high degree of ministerial conscientiousness, nor a high standard of ministerial aim. How often does it proceed from a desire to magnify our office in the eyes of men, rather than from zeal for the glory of God! How often is it but a splendid glorifying of one's self—a magnificent monument which we complacently rear to a subtle self-righteousness!

“ Since my illness my private thoughts have been, as was natural, more habitually turned to the contemplation of things invisible; but has any portion of their spirit transfused itself into my ministrations? Do I plead with my people as one with whom the Lord Himself hath pleaded? Do the powers of the world to come so affect and oppress my mind as to impart more weight and gravity to my expostulations, more urgency and solemnity to my authoritative calls? Do I speak to them as one to whom the Lord has spoken in the cloudy pillar! I fear not. Alas, how well satisfied I am if I can overtake the mere routine of duty? O Lord, keep me from that spirit of frivolity which steals upon me at unawares, and which

makes me look more to the doing of the duty than to the principle from which it is done. O thou Shepherd and Bishop of souls, make me to feel more deeply that ‘the office of a bishop’ to which thou hast called me is ‘a good work’ and a solemn ; needing much grace, spiritual illumination, knowledge, and judgment. May the thought of its importance and responsibility never be absent from my mind ! May this feeling pursue me into all societies, into all studies, into all recreations ; that everywhere and at all times I may study to approve myself to Thee, to make full proof of my ministry, and to be on the watch for the souls of men ! May thy Spirit give me boldness, faithfulness, discretion, quietness of mind, readiness of speech, that Thy work may never be hindered or hurt through my inadvertence or crime ; but that I, even I, may ere I see death be honoured to do something for Thee, O God, for Thee, O my Lord and Saviour, even though the world should never know it, even though I should never know it, but secretly, which Thou Thyself shalt know and graciously accept, saying of it and of Thine unworthy servant at the last, ‘He hath done what he could.’ Amen.

“ *Saturday, January 1, 1848.*—Something leads me to think of this day ten years ago. Well do I remember it. It was my first college session ; my earliest academic essays were written during these holidays. Well do I remember them : ‘On the Popular Assemblies of Athens,’ ‘On the Astronomy

of Cicero's *De Naturâ Deorum*. What an eventful portion of my life has intervened ! How full of change and excitement, of incidents obscure, indeed, but to me most memorable. Looking back upon them I seem to cast my eyes across a river, and to see nothing but an expanse of white, tossing and troubled waves. All my academic career, my connexion with those religious and literary societies which have given me almost all my dearest and most valued friends ; the awakening of my attention to the controversies of the Church ; the deep absorbing interest I felt in them ; the Disruption and its momentous issues ; my licence and ordination ; two years of my ministry ; my illness ; my removal here : all these things are comprised in the interval. And may I not look back upon this period as comprehending the beginning and the progress (alas, so slow and interrupted) of that which is far more important to me than all of these, but which some of them were most manifestly overruled to produce ? Reviewing the course of my short ministry, I see almost nothing in it that I can contemplate with complacency. Its imperfections rise up before me, and stare me in the face. As an ambassador of Christ, I have preached two hundred and fifty times to my fellow-sinners ; but how often have I preached myself, and preached to little profit ! Lord, this day pardon my manifold unworthiness. Wash my person and my services with the blood of sprinkling. Baptize me as one of thy prophets with the Holy Ghost. Anoint me with oil. Touch my

lips with spiritual fire. Make my heart grow warm and overflow with spiritual fervour.

“ *Friday, January 21.*—Commenced this evening a translation into blank verse of the Death of Socrates, from the *Phaedon* of Plato. I have long thought that that simple and pathetic narrative would make of itself an admirable poem. A poem indeed it is already; but I mean a poem in the vulgar sense of the word. I am getting sleepy; which reminds me of a beautiful epigram on sleep which I fell in with in reading to-day. I have seen it before, but I must record it here.

“ ‘ Somne levis ! quanquam certissima mortis imago,
Te socium cupio, te tamen esse tori.
Alma quies optata veni ! nam sic sine vita
Vivere quam suave est, sic sine morte mori.’

“ ‘ Soft balmy sleep ! though emblem of the dead,
Be thou the friend, the partner of my bed.
Sweet slumber come ! for ah, how great the joy
Thus without life to live, thus without death to die.

“ Could anything be finer in this way than Wordsworth’s three sonnets to sleep? They are deliciously Wordsworthian all over. The image of the fly upon the rivulet is inimitable.

“ ‘ Thou dost love
To sit in meekness, like the brooding dove,
A captive never wishing to be free.
This tiresome night, O sleep ! thou art to me
A fly, that up and down himself doth shove
Upon a fretful rivulet, now above,
Now on the water vexed with mockery.’

Miscellaneous Sonnets, xii.

“ *Saturday 22.*—Finished this morning my translation of the Death of Socrates.

“ *Monday, January 31.*—Found an observation in Sir W. Temple,* which I amused myself by versifying to-day:—

“ Alphonsus, King of Arragon,
 Who, in a former age,
 Was thought in Spain a paragon,
 And therefore called The Sage,
 Was wont in moralising mood
 To say, (and the remark was shrewd,)
 Of all the pleasures men possessed,
 And all the things that men pursued,
 Save and excepting four,
 The rest
 Were baubles, nothing more.
 Old wood, to warm one's toes over,
 Old friends and trusty,
 Old wine and crusty,
 And some old books to dose over.

“ *Sabbath, February 13.*—A beautiful morning, without clouds. Looking at the light spread like a garment of glory upon the broad mountains which I see every morning when first I open my eyes, and remembering it was the Sabbath, I thought,—How pleasant it is after refreshing sleep to be awakened in the morning watch with the risen light of the day-star from on high! So, with what a joyful surprise

* “ I shall conclude with a saying of Alphonsus, (surnamed The Wise,) King of Arragon,—that among so many things as are by men possessed or pursued in the course of their lives, all the rest are baubles, besides old wood to burn, old wine to drink, old friends to converse with, and old books to read.—*Of Ancient and Modern Learning: Temple's Works, (Svo.) vol. iii. p. 470.*

shall the bodies of the redeemed wake up from the sleep of death on the morning of the resurrection; with the light of glory beaming in their eyes, refreshed like herbs with the dews of their holy slumber in the Lord, and their ears ravished with the bursts of angelic melody, summoning them to share in the triumph of their Saviour. These mountains which I now see before me so radiant and beautiful were but a few days ago wrapped in mists, and darkened with wind and rain. Blessed are those souls on whom, after the storms and tempests of the world have beat on them, and misty doubts haunted and overshadowed them, the clouds returning after the rain, at last the Sun of Righteousness rises with healing under his wings, as the day of adoption breaks and the shadows flee away. ‘This is the day which the Lord hath made: we will rejoice and be glad in it. God is the Lord, who hath showed us light; bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar.’

“*Monday, February 14.*—If the traces of any peculiar mannerism can be detected in the poetry of Cowper, I think it is that of Phillips, a poet popular in his youth.* The earliest poem that Cowper wrote, his ‘Verses at Bath on finding the Heel of a Shoe,’ are quite in the style of ‘The Splendid Shilling’; and even ‘The Task’ is not free from a considerable infusion of the same mock-heroic element. One of the

* “In thy numbers, Phillips, shines for aye
The solitary shilling.”—*The Task.*

most decided points of his Bath verses is taken almost word for word from Phillips. Speaking of the heel, says Cowper,—

“ ‘ On this supported oft, he stretched
With uncouth strides along the furrowed glebe
Flattening the stubborn clod, till cruel time
(What will not cruel time ?) on a wry step
Severed the strict cohesion.’

“ Now hear Phillips:—

“ ‘ My galligaskins that had long withstood
The winter’s fury and encroaching frosts,
By time subdued, (what will not time subdue ?)
A horrid rent disclose.’

One of Cowper’s most peculiar and favourite forms of expression, is to interpose a substantive between two adjectives; like a gentleman supporting two ladies. In the poem already referred to, we have ‘ perforated hide compact,’ and in others, such phrases as ‘ devious course uncertain,’ ‘ purple spikes pyramidal,’ ‘ prominent wens globose,’ &c.

“ *Tuesday, February 15.*—Rose this morning with a headache—an unusual thing with me. Immediately after breakfast, having lain down on the sofa to read, had very unexpectedly a slight attack of haemoptysis. Sent for Dr Miller, who came, applied a blister, and ordered some other remedies; kept my bed for the rest of the day. ‘ My times, O Lord, are in thy hand.’

“ *Wednesday, February 16.*—Still kept bed. Had very composed and refreshing sleep last night;

for which, and in this illness, let me acknowledge the goodness of my God.

“*Friday, February 18.—Dies natalis.*

“SONNET ON MY BEING ARRIVED AT MY
TWENTY-FIFTH YEAR.

“Whilst I dream out my days, Time’s busy hands
Build slowly up the moments into years,
And, artist-like, from these fast-dropping sands,
The temple of my earthly life he rears.
Alas ! to me too surely it appears
To be a crazy structure, which commands
No prospect of continuance, and stands
On a most tottering base. But Thou those fears,
O God, canst turn to hope, that when the frail
Ark of my spirit crumbles into dust,
An undecaying mansion shall be mine,
Bought with my Saviour’s blood. Then through the vale
Of life let me proceed with lowly trust,
Contented heart, and will resigned to Thine !

“*Saturday, February 19.—My recovery advances favourably, blessed be God ! Mr Brown, the new English chaplain, has arrived, and is to officiate to-morrow.*

“*Sabbath, February 20.—The first Sabbath I have been silent since I came to Madeira. For this, in the first instance, let me bless God, and further, that He has permitted me to preach up to the very Sabbath that the pulpit in the Episcopal Chapel has been occupied by an evangelical minister. Mr Brown preached twice to-day. His discourses were appropriate and impressive, and give every prospect of a*

faithful ministry. The larger proportion of our people attended.

*“Saturday, March 4.—*After breakfast commenced a discourse on Hosea ii. 14, 15, ‘Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness,’ &c. At twelve o’clock Drs Broughton and Miller called, and the former minutely examined my chest with the stethoscope. Both of them agreed in opinion, and decidedly recommended me to reside in this climate for a few years. Such a step would, of course, involve the resignation of my ministerial charge at Dunblane—the very idea of which is unspeakably painful. They think it is not at all probable that I could continue to labour long at home without being permanently disabled. My mind has been a very chaos of conflicting thoughts all day, and I have only found relief in seeking direction and enlightenment from on high. ‘Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?’ Finished my sermon in the evening.

*“Sabbath, March 5.—*Preached from Hosea ii. 14, 15. Was mercifully delivered from the influence of those nervous anxieties and apprehensions which make me so miserable in the prospect of duty. To Thee, O Lord, is the praise. The congregation was good. Spent the afternoon and evening in quiet, devotional reading. Had a conversation with Dr Miller, who called in the afternoon, on the subject of yesterday’s consultation. Felt my mind able to contemplate the prospect of a permanent residence abroad with greater firmness and tranquillity.”

From this time forward, without further interruption, Mr Burns was enabled to prosecute his Sabbath and week-day ministry, till the return of that warm weather which sends Madeira visitors home or to cooler retreats in the country. On Saturday, the 27th of May, 1848, he left in the *Comet*, and landed at Broadstairs, near Ramsgate, on Saturday the 11th of June.

CHAPTER IV.

RESIGNATION OF HIS MINISTRY AT DUNBLANE, AND RETURN TO MADEIRA.

ARRIVED in England, Mr Burns lost no time in reaching Dunblane and resuming his labours among the people who had so filled the thoughts and prayers of the bygone winter, and who, as his own, were still so dear to him. But with the warnings he had received, he could not help feeling that his ministry among them was coming to a close, and it was with a valedictory feeling that he paid his visits and preached his sermons. In August, the Free Church Colonial Committee having offered him the permanent charge of the Presbyterian congregation at Funchal, after consulting medical friends and ministerial brethren, he accepted the appointment ; and although his warm-hearted hearers urged that he should try the effects of another season abroad, it was judged better that the pulpit should be at once declared vacant. Accordingly, on the 4th of October, 1848, he was formally set free by the presbytery, and on Friday, the 6th of October, after an interrupted sojourn of little more than three years, he went forth

from the scene of his earliest and most hopeful ministrations, and started on a new stage of his pilgrimage.

To the Rev. Alexander Paterson, who a few years afterwards became the Free Church minister at Dunblane, we are indebted for a communication which shows that nearly twenty years have not effaced the memory of that brief pastorate, and that though the labourer rests, his works still follow him.

“As a preacher, Mr Burns was, I need not say, here as elsewhere much admired. Better still, he was looked up to by some as their spiritual father, by others as one who really fed their souls, who cheered them when fainting, refreshed them when weary, roused them when languid, and ‘spake comfortably’ to them when perplexed with doubts, and struggling with spiritual adversaries. His first text as minister here gives us the key to show in what light he viewed himself, and how eager he was to give all the glory to God. That text was 2 Cor. iv. 7. He carried indeed a more than golden treasure, yet he was only a frail, earthen vessel. The power and the excellency thereof belonged to God alone. In this spirit he began, and in this spirit he closed his precious ministry.

“Amongst those who received their first impressions under him, two—the one an apprentice weaver, the other an apprentice gardener—were led to devote themselves to the work of the ministry. With the

former I am acquainted. He is now labouring in a distant mission-field in connexion with the Free Church.

“As a pastor, Mr Burns was greatly beloved. Shining in the pulpit, he shone no less in the chamber of sickness, and in the house of mourning. On all sides testimony is borne to his assiduous attentions in times of distress and bereavement. No one at such seasons had to complain of neglect at his hands. Fit, in private as in public, to minister to the highest, he was yet ready to minister to the humblest in his flock. Amiable, accessible, in him the poorest found one to whom they could freely unbosom themselves, one from whom they could expect the heartiest sympathy; and much did they, as well as the more intelligent, prize his visits.

“Often have I heard how he might be seen, late and early, wending his way to the sick-bed or the death-bed. I received a touching account of his attention to a dying girl, eight years of age. Many and profitable—profitable to her, and may I not add profitable to himself—were his visits to this young saint, for the name belongs to the youngest as well as to the oldest member in the household of faith. Carefully trained, this child knew and loved the Saviour. She knew that death was approaching. But she felt no fear. Being asked ‘whether she was afraid?’ she promptly, and with a smile, replied, ‘No.’ ‘And why not?’ ‘Jesus was with her, and therefore she was not afraid.’ Long would Mr

Burns sit beside this interesting child, comforting and cheering her, yet himself comforted in return. He was present when she died—the first death he ever witnessed. Returning, he met one of his office-bearers, and with tears, not of grief but of joy, in his eyes, and with choking utterance, said to him, ‘O James, I have just been witnessing what is enough to shame gray hairs.’

“ Both in and out of the pulpit, Mr Burns seems ever to have breathed an atmosphere of love. A frowning countenance he never wore, and bitter words he never dropped. Meek and humble, he treated no one haughtily. To the fury that some count faithfulness, he was an utter stranger. Like his blessed Master, far from breaking, he sought rather to bind up the bruised reed ; far from quenching, he strove rather to gently fan into flame the smoking flax.

“ May a blessing rest on your forthcoming volume ! May there fall on many of our rising preachers the mantle of him whose ministry here, though brief and sorely broken, was yet so much prized and so successful ! May many be raised up to preach as ably, and write as beautifully, and ‘ sing ’ as sweetly, and toil as heartily in the service of the Lord ! ”

Wednesday, the 1st of November, 1848, again found Mr Burns in Madeira. It was All-Saints’ day, and, landing amidst that bell music which he greatly loved, he took up his abode for the night under the roof of his kind and steadfast friend, Dr Miller. In

a few days he secured apartments, bought a pony, engaged a boy to take care of it, and with his books around him set up such a home as is permitted to an exile and an invalid. Here, for nearly five years, summer and winter, he tarried. As formerly, his work included two services each Lord's day in winter, and one in summer, besides a prayer-meeting during the week, and visits to British sailors in the hospital. But, perhaps, the most trying part of his ministry, involving much toil, and making large demands on his tender sympathy and Christian faithfulness, was his ministration to the sick and dying, whom every season sent in large numbers to the island. It was his happiness to guide into the way of peace some reluctant or repentant wanderers; but by none were his conversations and prayers so greatly prized as by those who already possessed a certain amount of spiritual earnestness. All of them well educated, many of them with refined habits, and keenly alive to the beauty which spread around them as well as the affection which they had left behind them, they felt sad at being so early summoned hence, or mourned because they did not sufficiently desire to depart and be with Christ, or were depressed by habitual sinfulness, and by those doubts and fears which, springing from an evil heart of unbelief, reason cannot dissipate. To such there could be no truer son of consolation. Nearly all their regrets and anxieties he had himself experienced, and for comfort was daily constrained to resort to God and the

word of His grace ; and as with tender fellow-feeling he met the varying phases of gloom or apprehension, to many a fevered fitful listener his speech dropped as the dew. In such labours of love no hour was unseasonable, no frequency of repetition was irksome ; and thus in God's kind overruling that servant of His, who could not hope to be a Boanerges, became a Barnabas. With sentence of death in himself, a Mr Greatheart to whom the post had brought his own summons, he was still able to speak words of cheer to Despondency, to Feeble-mind, and other pilgrims passing over the river.

A somewhat copious journal contains all the incidents of that second sojourn in Madeira. The temptation is strong to quote largely from it ; for its perusal could not fail to deepen the reader's interest in the thoughtful, tender-hearted writer. The hidden man of the heart there stands revealed—pastor and poet, the affectionate brother alternating with the sequestered anchoret, the man of letters, the man of feeling, and the man of God. But a very few extracts must suffice—extracts which we trust may illustrate the inner life :—

“ Saturday, October 5, 1850.—Scripture-reading with Manoel, (his servant,) who is rather an apt scholar. Afterwards wrote discourse. Afternoon, rode out to the eastward as far as the chapel of the Neves. Watched the sun sinking behind the hill of S. Martinho from the parapet, the round edge of the hill standing out sharp and black in a golden sky,

while the bay with its boats was whitening in the cold twilight, and dark winds ruffling over the sea. To-night the wind is rising. It is now 'raving in turret and tree ;' that wild moaning wind I love to hear. A windy night has had a peculiar charm for me from boyhood. It has always a strange effect upon my spirit, throwing me into a state of pleasureable excitement, and filling my mind with singular fancies. The wind-music, and the sound of the sea rolling in on a rocky beach, have this effect: They bear away my mind as on wings into that dim border-land of thought between the pleasant and the pensive, in which light and shadow are intermingled, where glimmering forms hover around at distance, and long-silent voices revive with mournful falls,—

‘ Quale per incertum lumen sub luce malignâ
Est iter in silvis ; ubi cœlum condidit umbrâ
Jupiter, et rebus nox abstulit atra colorem.’

It must be confessed that with the more imaginative aspect of the pleasure there blends a prosaic feeling of personal comfort, something like that described in the well-known lines of Lucretius, (*De Rerum Nat.*, lib. ii. 1-6,)—

‘ Suave, mari magno turbantibus æquora ventis,’ &c.

“ *Friday, November 1, 1850.*—On this day two years ago I landed in Madeira. Many sad recollections rushed upon my mind, as I walked down the street to-night. In one sense I can say that goodness and mercy have followed me. In so far as my highest

of earthly duties is concerned—the work of the ministry—I have been crowned with blessings. But dear connexions formed since that time have been severed ; there have been changes, sorrows, and disappointments. A sense of loneliness weighs heavy on my heart, and though I strive to look beyond time, there is too much of my nature still in it. Oh, that I could accept these solemn monitions in their true weight and significance ; that I could bless God for all the good I *have* seen in the land of the living, and be preserved from anything approaching to a murmur that He has not bestowed on me that full measure which I would have weighed out for myself. From this time may I go more softly. May my heart be more and more disentangled from the cares and affections of this vain life, which is as a shadow. May my life be more abstracted, more pilgrim-like, more heavenly ; forgetting the things that are behind, let me reach forth unto those things that are before."

"*Tuesday, February 18, 1851.*—This day I complete my 28th year. It does not seem a large segment of life ; it might be doubled, and yet leave the appointed measure of man's days in distant prospect ; but I am persuaded that with me the line will only lengthen a few years at the farthest before it terminates. As I write the number of my days, I am surprised at its apparent smallness ; so much older do I feel myself in reality—so familiar with the thoughts and forebodings that dimly shape themselves to the mind through the twilight of its earthly being. Yet

how insensibly and insidiously do such graver thoughts take their place among the materials of consciousness, and become so accustomed a portion of it that they lose their power to solemnise and elevate and awaken. Had that Hand traced its fiery ciphers every night on the wall of Belshazzar's banquet-hall, it would not have stopped the mad progress of the revelry. What a mystery of iniquity and self-deception is this human heart! Death at a distance terrifies us as a gloomy apparition; when he has come nearer, and walked beside us for a time, he does not seem so sepulchral a companion after all. Oh, that my familiarity with this thought and all thoughts that affect my eternal state may be more purified from every earthly element, so that if I have known them after the flesh, I may henceforth *thus* know them no more! There is a fear of death which worketh to despondency, from which I would pray to be delivered; but that fear of it which works to prayerful and unwearied preparation for its coming, I would desire ever to retain. Preserve it, O God, in all its force and freshness in my mind, that now and ever I may apply my heart to wisdom. May the sense of shortening days keep me in more habitual communion with the realities of that life, more consciously influenced by the powers of the world to come. This persuasion, once so solemnising, too often appears like a faded and outworn experience. Oh, give it life and power, that it may go out and come in with me, and cast a chastening shadow over my life of thought and action, and speak to me with a

spiritual voice, and be a ministering angel, whom I may entertain, and not unawares. Thou hast weakened my strength in the way ; Thou hast shortened my days. But art Thou not from everlasting, O Lord my God, mine Holy One ? We shall not die. The 'power of an endless life' is Thine, O Priest upon the Throne ! Thou art the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Thou art a rock ; may my goings be established thereon ; may I find 'the stone of Israel' firm under my feet in the swellings of Jordan !

"*Sabbath, May 11, 1851.*—Enjoyed the hallowed privileges of a communion Sabbath. Preached from Rev. i. 5, 6, 'Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father, to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever.' Afterwards fenced the table with an address, during which the congregation seemed affected and solemnised. Since entering the ministry I have always found that the anxiety and care of the outward ministration of the ordinance do not permit me to wait upon the Lord without distraction, that my thoughts are too much occupied with what I should say to men, when my heart should be setting itself devoutly to speak alone with God. Let me acknowledge with gratitude that I did not feel this unsettlement of mind so much to-day as I have done, that I could spend some sacred moments in calm and tranquil meditation on that love unspeakable, to which I owe

all my hopes, and which has given me access by faith into this grace wherein I stand. Oh that I could more heartily rejoice in the sense of thy love to me, my Saviour, and say, 'I will remember thy love more than wine. Thy name is as ointment poured forth.' Oh that the love of Christ would put forth its constraining power upon my heart, that I may no longer look on myself as my own, but the Lord's, who bought me with His blood. I have joined myself to Him in the bond of an everlasting covenant: 'O Lord, truly I am thy servant, and the son of thine handmaid. Thou hast loosed my bonds.' 'I am thine; save me, for I seek thy precepts.' Take the free-will offering of my heart. Take it and subdue it to thyself by the mighty working of thy grace. May it be henceforward not I living, but Christ living in me; not I working, but the grace of God which is with me. Build me up on the foundation of my holy faith. Give me the spirit of prayer in the Holy Ghost. Enable me to keep myself in the love of God, looking for the mercy of the Lord Jesus unto eternal life. May I cultivate the spirit of daily communion with thee, growing in the graces of the divine life, and abounding in the fruits of righteousness. Give me tenderness of conscience, O God, that will shrink alarmed on the very appearance of evil. Give me spirituality of mind, that will hate the garment spotted by the flesh. Give me lofty principle, that I may be a prevailing and steadfast witness for Christ; holy decision, that I may have no fellowship

with the unfruitful works of darkness. Give me the spirit of meekness and temperance, of long-suffering and zeal, of purity and benevolence, of uprightness and charity. Mould me and fashion me after Thy image, O my Saviour. Crucified with Thee, may the body of sin be daily dying. Risen with Thee, may my affections be set on things above, and my spirit daily growing in meetness for the heavenly inheritance.

"Sabbath, May 25, 1851.—Preached twice as usual. Intimated that in future the afternoon service would be discontinued. Here let me make thankful acknowledgment of the goodness of God in bringing me through the unaided duties of another winter. I looked forward to them with many fears, but He has strengthened me to overtake them without the interruption of a single Sabbath. I have not been without remembrancers of my constitutional infirmity, but they have not been permitted to interfere with my endeavours to be useful to those over whom He has placed me. Gracious hast Thou been to me, O my God, yet how unfaithful, how unprofitable have I been in Thy service. Thou hast made me a keeper of the vineyard, but my own vineyard I have not kept, and therefore I cannot bring Thee a larger return for the fruit thereof. Enable me to watch for souls as one that must give account; to be more conscientious, more devoted, more self-surrendered into Thy hands. I know where my great strength lieth. All my springs, O my Saviour, are in Thee.

This is Thy work, not mine. It is not I who am able to fulfil it, but Thy grace which is with me. Let it work in me mightily, that my labour may not be in vain. I am weak and helpless, but Thou art the strength of Israel. I would lay hold of Thy strength ; I would trust in Thy all-sufficiency ; I would not limit the Holy One of Israel. Thou canst help my infirmities. Thou canst purify my lips to speak aloud of Thy righteousness. Thou canst make me drink into the fulness of Thy living Spirit, so that from the deepest part of my nature rivers of living water may flow for the comfort and refreshment of Thy people. Let the beauty of the Lord my God be upon me, that the work even of my hands may be established. ‘ Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation ; uphold me with Thy free Spirit. Then will I teach transgressors Thy way, and sinners shall be converted unto Thee.’ The time is short ; the work is for eternity. When the evening shadows fall upon me, may I be found not to have been an idle servant in Thy vineyard—worse, infinitely worse, than to have stood idle in the market-place.

“ *Sabbath, June 15, 1851.*—How much is said in our day about thorough-going and decision of character ! How conspicuous and prevailing are these qualities in almost every department of mental activity and outward life ! Yet how seldom do men dream of making any application of them to the lofty and enduring interests of another ! The

literature of the time may be called the apotheosis of earnestness—of manly, resolute, untiring straightforwardness in the work which every man finds given for himself to do. It would seem that the idea of ‘work’ was the mystery hidden from ages and generations, but now published and sent abroad upon the world with the clearness and sacredness of a revelation. When I look into the Scripture, I find every exercise of this practical philosophy, so far as it is true and genuine, anticipated there. I find there an incarnation of the spirit of diligence and devotedness and self-sacrifice—not dividual and fragmentary, as it must be when contracted within the limits of the present life, but complete, full-sphered, all-pervading, by linking man’s life on earth to the great central fact of his immortality. There is a deep-seated rationalism in the tone of thinking to which we have alluded. Not in all cases; for the error is in the restriction of the principle to this life exclusively, and Arnold is a memorable example, who could grasp it and give it free action through the whole circle of thought and endeavour. But as a protruded and distinctive quality of thought, we fear it is essentially material—looking upon the world as the place in which man is to achieve something for himself, and not as the chosen ground on which, in God’s strength, he is to fulfil a work given him for God’s glory.

“ Purify my mind and will, O God, from every element of earthliness, and set the great realities of

an immortal being so clearly before me, that there may be stamped on everything that I do, the character of a serene and sacred decision. I have said that I am Thine; Thee I profess to serve. Take away from me all wavering, all weakness of purpose, all double-mindedness, all spirit of compromise between Thee and the world. Forbid that I should fall into that Laodicean security which tends to lukewarmness, so offensive in Thy sight that Thou wouldst rather have the coldness which makes no profession, than be mocked with a form of godliness without the power. Enable me to rise clear above the low-thoughted element of a life that measures itself by time; to break decidedly away from the influences that are at work around me to seduce my heart from Thee. Lift me up to the full height and stature of my spiritual being, as one that presses toward immortality, looking for and hastening unto the coming of the day of God, when I shall fully and for ever apprehend that perfection of holiness for which, in Christ Jesus, Thy grace hath apprehended me."

When we commune with our own heart, or with God, we are solemn: when we commune with a neighbour there are two faces in the glass, and from the countenance of our friend our own takes an expression dark or radiant, and the outcome is accordingly playful or prosaic, grave or gay. Mr Burns was not without reserve. Like all men of depth or delicacy, he had thoughts and feelings which he confided to

very few. At the same time he was social, and in his circle of friendship were men of very different tastes and affinities—devout, polemical, classical, homely. Many of his Madeira letters have come into our hands, and very charming they are with their descriptions of scenery and reminiscences of vanished years—with the humour or the tenderness, the mournful regret or aspirations which the mood of his own mind prompted, or which the turn of his correspondent elicited. In venturing a few quotations we run the risk of criticism. Worldly men will lament that one so genial should have been so saintly; austere men will sigh at his pleasantry; and sturdy divines, as they take their toddy, will say that in his circumstances his thoughts should have been entirely occupied with higher things. There are many men whose mind is a monochord. It was not so with our friend. His harp had many strings, and whether the music were plaintive or cheerful, the minstrel was always sincere.

The first of the following letters is to a college contemporary, now in business, and who in that capacity managed Mr Burns's financial matters whilst abroad.

To James Maclean, Esq.

“SAINT AMARO, MADEIRA.
July 9, 1851.

“Here is the first week of July past, and Sirius in the ascendant, and the pleasant vintage time approaching, and I, instead of sitting comfortably with

you in a certain back parlour, and discussing a whole encyclopædia of topics, as some months ago I fondly pictured, am quietly settled in the dreamy solitude of a 'moated grange' in one of the most enchanted nooks of this sunny Atlantic island. I left the town, which was beginning to be dangerously hot, in the first days of June, and transferred myself and establishment (a bearded serf or villain, of the name of Manoel, who playeth cunningly on the viol) to the aforesaid *quinta*, which stands embowered in chesnut and fig trees on the airy brow of a vine-covered hill. The house itself—porch, walls, and side-walls—is muffled with vines to the throat. They are now blackening in the mellow July sunshine. The birds which haunt the neighbouring thickets—for 'the air is delicate'—hitherwards resort to 'fret with the golden dagger of their bills' the purple summer fruit. These 'bills' by me are duly honoured. I esteem five minutes liquid fluting, when the revel is over, and the wine-fumes are stealing into the brain of the wassailers, a discharge in full. Here is a grove of chesnut-trees now in blossom near the house, which is a favourite resort. When the sun is high and hot, and the air tingling along the edge of tree and mountain with the white insufferable glow, I retreat thither, and mount up one of the gnarled trunks into the very heart of one of the laden branches, feel the coolness of the leaves all round me, and read as in the ancient days in Wordsworth's garden at Grasmere.

“ I really do not know why I have slid into this strain. I began my letter with the intention of telling you the most serious thoughts which have lately been weighing upon my mind. From the opening you must imagine that I am leading an indolent, luxurious life, ‘the world forgetting, by the world forgot,’ in some such retreat as that—

‘ Amidst the gardens fair
Of Hesperus and his daughters three,
That sing about the golden tree.’

But I assure you, dear Mac., the case is very different. My writing to you always awakens old and genial associations, which never revive but then. It is like raking in the ashes of a smouldering fire, which no one would suspect to live under the dead residuum of its earlier strength. Besides, it is very singular (I have often observed it in myself) that the tongue is most apt to trifle when the heart is sorrowful. The lid of the casket in which we carry a mortal poison about with us is carved with fantastic figures and random fancies.

“ I can hardly understand how it is that, with the symptoms of mortal decay which I daily feel—the long sown seeds which are ripening to certain dissolution—I find it so difficult to preserve that solemn chastening sense of eternity which I desire to cherish. There are times when, looking to the glorious all-sufficiency of the atonement of the gospel, to the willingness of the Saviour to receive all who come to Him, polluted and unworthy though they be—nay, rather *because*

they be—I feel I could willingly depart, and be taken away in mid-time of my days. Then I can look to the darkness, which is but a little way before me, with something of the feeling with which the hireling desires the evening shadow. I think I can see the mild gleam of a sinless immortality shining through it—‘at evening time it shall be light’—the serene promise or presentiment of that eternal rest which remaineth for the people of God. Then again all is doubt and despondency: I seem to walk in darkness, and have no light. I can even preach what brings enlightenment and comfort to others, but seems judicially deprived of all spiritual virtue to myself. At such a time what would I do, my dear friend, were it not for the still small voice of hope that sounds like an audible inspiration from every page of the Bible? After all, what eloquence of refining philosophy, what melodious charm of poetry, can equal these divine, heart-cheering words, ‘Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest’? In the pressure of sorrow, amidst the languor of sickness, in the prospect of death, what hope remains to us but this? What firmer foundation to establish our souls upon can we desire? What a blessed confidence is that, ‘I know Him whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day!’ I think I have given the keeping of my eternal interests into His hand. May God brighten my hope into the sober certainty of spiritual joy!

May He bring all my thoughts and aims and aspirations into captivity to the obedience of Christ ; that I may know the blessedness of that coming time for which the Church is longing, begun in me even now, the kingdom of righteousness and peace and joy set up in me, and all the affections and energies and passions of this mysterious nature, which else would rend and consume it, led quietly by the hand of the Little Child of Bethlehem !

“ I have cause to bless God, indeed I cannot think of it without humiliation, that my ministry in Madeira has been in several cases the means of accomplishing its highest end in turning the heart to God. . . . For some time past I feel I have been steadily losing ground in point of health. I know you will attribute this to my getting moped and nervous, and it is quite natural you should. But I have substantial grounds for believing it. If I am permitted to return, I fear it will be in no condition to break ground in a new field of labour. After all my wanderings and windings, it will only be to come back like the hunted hare to the spot where I was nourished, and there die.”

To the Rev. John Anderson.

“ FUNCHAL, MADEIRA.

February 19, 1852.

“ I am glad to hear you are employed so usefully, and not without some evidence of good. You must be acquiring some valuable experience, a kind of

knowledge not to be learned from books. I suppose your missionary labours bring you sometimes into contact with the sick and dying. My own impression is that this is perhaps the best preparation for ministerial work. It appears to me of much greater importance *now* than I used to consider it. It is a wholesome discipline for one's own mind, there being so much to chasten and solemnise, and also to interest in it. Then it throws you back on the essentials of religion, and makes you feel a freshness and power in them, which they are apt to lose (as a fine fruit loses its delicate bloom) in the coarse handling of merely intellectual study. And, what is perhaps the greatest advantage of all, you deal with the mind or heart when it is most susceptible of impression; when the ear is opened unto discipline, and the powers of the world to come press with a more vivid force and reality upon the spirit. How has the great Healer of the distempered world glorified the obscurest ministration! ‘The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I might speak a word in season to him that is weary.’ ‘I was sick, and ye visited me.’

“I was grieved to hear of the serious illness of your cousins. You must feel it deeply. I am perhaps become too familiar with the outward appearances of such decay. I am often surprised it does not affect me more. But there will be very much in this to impress *your* mind, and I can imagine the distress of their family. I trust they may have that consola-

tion, the only one such a trial admits of, which arises from seeing an inward and undying life rooting itself and springing up in the soul amidst the decays of nature. What is death in such a case? The perishing of something that only hangs as a husk upon the life: the laying down of ‘that weary load of death called life, which us from life doth sever.’

“ I have been anxiously thinking of late what my future course is to be. I have a feeling that I am not doing much good here. Perhaps it is not a right expression, but it is something like a conviction that I have exhausted my means of usefulness. I think it would be my duty to return to Scotland if there was any prospect of continued usefulness there. But the state of my health precludes this. I frankly tell you I have a perfect horror of the idea of becoming minister of another congregation, and then being compelled to resign it. That would be Dunblane over again, and the remembrance is too bitter to allow me to place myself in similar circumstances again. I have sometimes thought of a small congregation in the south of England, at other times of the south of Australia, where there is a great want of ministers, and a genial climate. I feel it would be almost as easy to live at the antipodes as here, once all the associations with home are loosened or broken. Into this soil I have struck no deep roots, and could bear transplanting.

“ I have been reading Carlyle’s ‘Life of Sterling’ lately. It had a peculiar interest for me, Sterling

being a man like myself, in delicate health, compelled to roam about from place to place; at one time a clergyman, living some time in Madeira, and dying young. It has left a very melancholy impression on my mind. You are aware he became sceptical, and died in darkness and doubt, owing to Carlyle's influence in a great measure. What a contrast to Hewitson, and the practical enduring influence of his life. I had read Hewitson's life some months before, and could not help drawing the parallel as I read the memoir of poor Sterling. These two men stood at opposite spiritual poles. The lesson of each life is a deep and weighty one: the comparative value of each is brought out as by a vivid gleam from eternity at the close. The last phase of infidelity—the more refined and literary abjuration of Christianity—finds its representative in Sterling. The book is important too, from Carlyle having spoken out at last in it against the common faith; but the old anvil will wear out the heavy hammer of the rugged northern Thor, as it has done many a one before.

“ This winter I have the society and assistance of a brother minister, Mr Denniston, who was at Malta for a year or two, and previously a missionary to the Jews. He preaches for me once a fortnight, and is most ready and even anxious to embrace opportunities of usefulness. I feel very thankful that he has come here.

“ I see you are an admirer of Tennyson. I have outgrown that youthful enthusiasm, and love the

more serene and chastened beauties of W. W. What do you think of *him*? I have no doubt you will come by and by to be of my opinion. Still 'In Memoriam' is a noble work, and I do not believe the *Times*, which is offended at its seditious tendency. At least, I hope there is nothing of the kind in it. A bad thing to suspect a snake under the laurel leaves ; but Cleopatra's asp, 'the pretty worm of Nilus,' was covered up with fig leaves."

CHAPTER V.

CONTINENTAL TOUR.

AFTER nearly four years captivity in his sea-girt isle, it is not strange that Mr Burns felt a desire for enlargement. But what he could save of his ministerial income was spent in enabling younger members of his family to secure those educational advantages which conducted one brother to an honourable position in the Christian ministry, and ushered another on his chosen career as a surgeon. It was not till the summer of 1852 that he was able to gratify his longing for change, and when at last, in the end of June that year he left Madeira, it was not for Scotland, but for a tour through Portugal, Spain, Sicily, and Italy. It extended over three months, and was the source of great enjoyment. His notes and recollections were afterwards written out, evidently with a view to publication. But it never was any pleasure to Mr Burns to see his own productions in print, and, unmoved by the offer of an eminent publisher in Edinburgh, he would not convert into lucre his labour of love, but left the fair manuscript locked up in his desk. Many of the scenes which he

describes are now familiar to thousands of English tourists, and there are few books of travel which do not become antiquated in far less than fifteen years ; but from amongst passages which have interested ourselves, or which give personal glimpses of the writer, we extract a few pages.

OFF CAPE ST VINCENT.

A PORTUGUESE SHIP'S COMPANY.

Four bells had struck on the tenth morning of our voyage,—from where it matters not,—and our ship, a fast little brig under Portuguese colours, was lurching over the long sleepy swell of the Atlantic under the brown cliffs of Cape St Vincent. There was a swarming movement of light and heat in the air. The sky was flecked here and there with shreds of thin silvery cloud. The waves were soft and warm, and heaved upwards, as the vessel rose and fell, with a full soothing gurgle and splash. Over the land there was a fierce yellow glare of African light. It must have been a day of scorching heat in all the vineyards and olive-groves of Portugal from Algarves to the Minho.

Ships of all flags and all possible arrangements of sails and “spars,” from the stately frigate to the skimming swallow-like felucca, were standing up from all points toward the Straits, and streaming out from it in all directions over the wide waves. A man-of-war swaggers like a patrician on the highway of nations. Your merchantman, deep in the water with its solid freight, holds on its course like a grave, sober, steady-going burgher. For us, a mere passenger vessel, we were content to steal along at a leisurely pace, like sauntering idlers in a crowd of busi-

ness men hurrying to the Exchange. The passengers, scattered in groups forward and along the sides, were gazing at the convent that crests the headland, a mass of gray weather-beaten buildings huddled together on the steep and narrow ridge. Of the same time-stained colour as the cliffs, it seems to have grown up out of them like a huge fungus. Its lofty tower, long an eminent sea-mark, now serves as a lighthouse. I wonder if the monks droning in the chapel heard the sound of the British guns on the day of the great sea-fight. Some of the wrecks, torn and shattered by the shot, must have drifted in—a dismal story to tell long after to the novices on winter nights, when the storm howled without, and the brotherhood felt the time, as even monks must occasionally, hang heavy on their hands.

We were a motley company thrown together during these days by stress of circumstances in this same brig. With some business, with others pleasure, love of adventure and variety, had been the cause of their apprehension and confinement for an indefinite period in their creaking prison with a chance of drowning. A few Brazilians, one of them a *conego* or canon of the Church ; a Jewish rabbi, who slept in something like a meat-safe on deck, and never undressed, and moved about with his dark raiment studded with woolly tufts and flocks of blanket ; a strange taciturn personage, rumoured to be the captain of a Spanish slaver ; some Portuguese soldiers, who slouched about in dirty cloaks, and had registered a vow against cold water ; and, of course, a few Scotchmen.

In the fore-part of the vessel was an assassin under sentence of death, walking about quite freely, and occasionally called upon by the cabin passengers for the murder, which

he cheerfully gave with lively gesticulations and great fluency of speech. The talk of the Brazilians was of Spanish *duros*, bales of cotton, and yellow fever. But they had not much time for conversation. All day long, and far into the night, were all their faculties absorbed in card-playing, and of all the gamblers the aforesaid pillar and ornament of the Brazilian Church, whose name was Gregorio Nazianzeno, was most indefatigable. No one handled the cards more scientifically, no one shuffled and dealt and staked them with cooler precision and steadier nerve. The first morning of the voyage,—it chanced to be Sunday,—as I lay in my berth, pensive and subdued by some premonitory symptoms, to which I need not farther allude, I could hear the bilious little churchman busy making up a select party for a rubber at whist. The moment breakfast was over, and from that day to the last, his life was one interminable rubber, with trifling interludes of meals and sleep. The pack of cards was his breviary, the vermeil and sable symbols the illuminations of his missal. His compatriots said he had won enough on his voyage from Brazil to pay his travelling expenses to Lisbon, and leave something over for charitable purposes or masses for his soul. Three times a day this dignified cleric appeared on deck, and this was when the preparations for the different meals disturbed the rigour of the game, and the white cloth was substituted for the green. It was then his wont to promote his intellectual culture by assiduous study of a Rio Janeiro newspaper, *O Correio Mercantil*. He never got beyond the first page, which was filled with advertisements. I used to wonder what mental nourishment or solace he derived from notices of auctions, shipping items, and hues and cries

after runaway negroes. There he sat with his clammy, sallow, unwholesome features vacantly scanning the dreary columns. My private opinion is that he was then employed in mental card games, solving self-propounded problems like those chess puzzles which adorn the *Illustrated News*. One day when he came up flushed with victory, after six hours' hard work below, Gregory of Nazianzum became quite frank and sociable over his favourite print. Somehow, Cardinal Wiseman's name turned up, and he played him off as a trump card in the great game between Popery and Protestantism. His theory of the Reformation was novel and striking. Luther not having risen fast enough in the Church took umbrage at the Pope, and when his Holiness preached up a crusade against the Turks, and wished to raise a loan by giving drafts on another world, where, perhaps, it will turn out he has no effects, the saucy monk thought fit to oppose it, and, these crusading times being rough and boisterous, found numbers to back him in a very pretty quarrel.

My reverend friend was strong in cards, but weak in chronology. To do him justice he admired the English character. There was something in its firmness and integrity which had struck him as peculiar. "I have seen your merchants at Rio!" he said. "When one of them gives you his word, he stands to it. When he appoints a certain hour, he comes as the clock strikes." The conego traced this peculiarity to its source. Long practice at cards had whetted his faculties, and given him analytical insight and depth. It was clearly owing to climate acting in some subtle manner both on the physical and moral conformation of the people. Education, he admitted, might have something to do with it, but the mainspring and

governing influence was climate. We are not, I suspect, grateful enough by half to the fogs and rains which have settled into us, and nurtured us into the truthful, upright, straightforward nation that we are. If Englishmen would accept the canon's genial philosophy, they would not hang and drown themselves in the gloomy month of November. A dose of Jesuits' bark would cure them of the morbid propensity.

So talked and theorised the venerable Churchman in a lucid interval, and thereupon plunged deeper into cards than ever. He had clearly been born when Venus and Mars—Queen of Hearts and Knave of Clubs—stood in benign conjunction on the horoscope. I afterwards met him in the *Plaça do Commercio* at Lisbon. What a change! He was sauntering under the shady arches in a suit of spotless black, clean linen, and a gold-headed cane. A profusion of jewellery and gold chains of the thickness of bell-ropes adorned his lean, withered person, and the red riband and trinket of some Brazilian order of merit dangled from his button-hole. Once again we met in a crowd in the sunny square of Cintra. He rushed into my embrace, assured me that the scenery was enchanting, the mutton delicious, and that he was undergoing the water-cure in these verdant retreats. I thought it an appropriate penance for his grievous neglect of the element during a fortnight's voyage.

An amusing instance of the “nil admirari” principle was mentioned one day. A Brazilian visited England in the Great Exhibition year. Some of his friends had thought of following him, but he wrote home dissuading them. He said he had seen nothing which came up to his ideas of progress or refinement. Had the Brazilian

department got hold of this specimen of their native brass, and set him on a pedestal, or under a glass-case, or in an iron cage, he would have been as much gazed at as Kiss's Amazon or the Koh-i-noor.

The sunsets which closed some of these sultry days as we crept up the Lusitanian coast were lovely. It was pleasant to watch the westering sun draw up and drape his gorgeous robe of clouds gracefully about him that he might fall with majesty. His brightness shone through the veil upon his face. Through every chink and crevice of the tinted vapour the warm rich light was gushing, and a net of glittering meshes, that quivered in each of its golden twisted cords with an electric fire, trailed slowly over the dull blue waves. One evening as it went down broad and bare behind the sea, a distant ship was thrown out suddenly in clear relief against the deep-red disk. Masts, spars, and cordage were traced sharply in the ring of crimson fire, and it stood motionless awhile, as if held by enchantment—a wild device on a bloody shield.

And then to watch the moon, that had been so white and wan in that great glory of the west, silently fill with light and cast a silvery brightness through the dewy air, and all round to the wavering edge where the clear heaven rested on the sea. The light lay upon the water, here in broad spaces of radiance, there in flakes and scales,—trembling, fading, and brightening again on the wide swell like some curious arabesque on blue armour or quaint oriental cyphering on a blade of watered steel. Streaks of strange yellow fire were cleaving and writhing through the element with every movement of the ship, like knots of lithe golden snakes.

CINTRA.

The intense heat of the city soon drove me to Cintra. It was so sultry and stifling that when you breathed you seemed to take in mouthfuls of warm wind. The effort to walk drew from you the deepest sighs. You felt your strength oozing out at every pore, and the sight of the glaring mounds of rubbish with the white soil splitting, and the weeds shrivelling in the fiery air, gave one's mind a gloomy determination to the thought of earthquakes. I breathed freely as our omnibus, with its six mules jingling their bells merrily in the fresh morning air, rattled out of the Praça do Pelonrinho, notable for its wonderful twisted pillar. The ghost of earthquake that had walked through my sleeping and waking dreams for a week vanished at the sound. The road is through a tame uninteresting country—fields poorly cultivated rising into low hills, surmounted with windmills in such numbers, that had Don Quixote sallied forth from Lisbon instead of La Mancha in quest of adventures, his journey to Tobosa would have been arrested for an indefinite period. Here and there you see some links of the great Aqueduct of Alcantara spanning the valleys like the chain of broken arches that gives such mournful interest to the Roman Campagna. The convent of the Pena, of which you have a view on entering the Tagus, is seen perched on its naked crags afar off. There is nothing to give you an idea of the enchanting beauty of Cintra till you are close upon it. The steep road makes a sudden bend round a spur of the mountain at the moment you are feeling that it is most dreary, and a magnificent expanse of verdure springs up in the midst of the wilderness. You are in the green heart of a woodland region

high up among the hills. The slopes all around are dark with forests, bold mossy crags jut out in the most picturesque positions — gray headlands leaning over seas of greenery — tangled copsewood clothing their weather-stained sides, and quiet gorges opening far below, through which mountain brooks twist and sparkle. And away above the woods, and all round to the very summits, are wild masses of rock broken and dashed about, and piled fantastically over one another in the strangest fashion, as if some giant fortress had once stood there, and a mine sprung beneath it had burst it asunder, and heaped up its splintered fragments—or rather, as I sometimes thought, as if the rude columns and slabs of some Druidic monument —some weird colossal structure like Stonehenge, heaved up and poised on the mountain ridge—had been shattered by an earthquake, and its granite spikes left protruding from the wreck, and squat clumsy pillars caught and held slanting as they reeled. It is a ghastly chaos with some grotesque conceptions struggling through it. In many places the rocks seem grouped and balanced so lightly that you might almost think the wind would loosen them, and let slip the crushing avalanche on the deep forests below. I have seldom witnessed anything that looked so unearthly as these storm-wasted turrets and bastions rising out of the mist, like tents topping a low ground-fog—fretting the clear sky with the lines of their Titanic architecture, and casting misshapen shadows far down the wooded slopes.

PORtUGUESE PROVERBS.

With that slight tendency to exaggeration which may sometimes be met with in Portugal, this same bridge (that of St Pedro d'Alcantara) is described as the largest in the

world. “ Its arches, some of which have a prodigious altitude, are the stupefaction and bewilderment of strangers, who never encounter among the works of the Romans any structure so colossal as this.” “ Pôô he pôô, e vinho vinho, e não ha gente conno nós !” Bread is bread, and wine wine, and there is no people like ourselves. “ O Inglez he forte par ’o mar, e Francez para terra, mas o Portuguez he forte par’ o mar e terra !” English is good for the sea, and French for the land, but Portuguese is good for sea and land.

The Spaniards, rather unmindful of the beam in their own eye, ridicule these gasconades. They are very merry at the expense of their self-trumpeting neighbours, whom they heartily dislike. National likings are generally in an inverse ratio to national affinities. There is not much difference of complexion between the two, but to express the deepest shade of dark in the human face, the Spaniards say, “ Tan quemado como uno Portugues !” As sunburnt as a Portuguese. “ Three Spanish rascals make a good Portuguese,” is another of their sayings. But Spain for the present aside, the Portuguese is always in the superlative mood. “ Cada bofarinheiro louva sens alfinetes.” Every pedlar praises his own needles, and they would uphold theirs against Sheffield and Birmingham to boot. Their language on the commonest subjects could only be rendered in English by as copious a use of italics and inverted commas, and points of admiration, as Bishop Law made of parentheses, when the press was stopped on one occasion till a further supply could be procured of these needful curves. It is a hysterical, dash-disrupted, dithyrambic idiom. If they like, they idolise, if they dislike, they “ abhor,” if they are annoyed,

they are “crucified.” If they express their aversion to any man’s society, they say, “Com elle en nao quero nem ir para O ceo!” With such a fellow I would not wish to go to heaven.

It is not an agreeable confession, but it cannot be denied, that nowhere are England and the English held in less favour than in the Peninsula. True, we rescued the two countries from the degradation of becoming a satrapy of France, but they cannot bring themselves to acknowledge the obligation. It would be easier for the Portuguese to forgive the French for making the attempt than us for helping them to thwart it. Well do the Spaniards say in proverbs, “El dia de beneficio es la vespera de ingratitud :” The day of a benefit is the eve of ingratitude. In a work published at Lisbon, which is before me, and professes to give minute information on points of interest, the author speaks glibly of the “formidable lines of Torres Vedras, which baffled Massena with a powerful army of soldiers of Napoleon,” but not one allusion is made to the master-mind which planned these defences and saved the capital. For one portrait of the great English Captain you will see three of Napoleon and his filibustering marshals.

The Portuguese, like the Spanish, is rich in proverbs, that paper-currency of wisdom which circulates so freely among the common people. If a man is always happy in his undertakings, they say, “Ha sujeitos que a mesma fortuna lhes-vai assoprando as palhinhas :” There are men from whose path fortune brushes every little straw. If they want to show the danger of procrastination, “Com agoas passadas não moe o morirho :” There is no grinding with the waters that have passed the mill. Does a man grossly flatter another, “Chequeha os narizes com o thuri-

bulo :" He swings the censer so high that he breaks his nose. We say, " Between the devil and the deep sea," their phrase is, " Entre a cruz e a agoa basta :" Between the cross and the holy water. " Pobre he o diabo que lhe-falta a graça de Deos :" The devil is poor because he wants the grace of God. Medical science is at a low ebb in Portugal, and the Sangrados are roughly handled in the current sayings : " Quando o enfermo diz ai ! o medico diz dai !" When the sick man cries ah me ! the doctor cries my fee ! Nor are the lawyers a whit better off ; " Mais val ma avenca que ben sentença :" Better a bad compromise than a decision in your favour—an adage sometimes verified farther north. It is an ungallant speech, but it may be true, " O melao e a mulher maos são de conhecer :" A melon and a woman are hard to be known. The Portuguese are great eaters of garlic, " Em tempo nevado o alho vale hem cavallo :" In foggy weathers garlic is as good as a horse. It would be well enough if reserved for these occasions, but they must find it of singular virtue in all weathers. " Amor e senhoria não qua companhia :" Love and lordship don't like rivalry. " Quem tem quatro, e gasta cinco, não ha mister bolsa :" He that has four and spends five has no need of a purse. " Por dar dâo, Por dar dâo, dizemos suios de Sant' Antão :"

If you would be getting, be giving alway,
So do the pigs of St Anthony say.

THE CATACOMBS AT PALERMO.

Under the guidance of a Capuchin, who wore at his girdle a bunch of heavy keys, I descended into the catacombs, and with a mind wrought up to a painful excitement, traversed those galleries and chambers of the dead.

Skeletons, or rather mummies, everywhere in all sorts of attitude, and with all shades of expression, from hideous laughter to idiotic vacuity, on their sodden features ; skeletons standing, lying, sitting,—here in solitary meditation, there gathered in family circles and social groups, with their heads inclining forward in ghastly confidence to each other, as if whispering secrets for which some skeleton spy might denounce them to a skeleton Bomba ; skeletons arrayed in all sorts of costumes, some standing about in loose shrouds with easy negligence, others after an elaborate toilet looking down and wondering out of glass cases ranged on shelves along the wall. Everywhere skeletons, three or four deep in the ranks, fading away into confused bony perspective on either hand, turning round corners into side chambers and corridors where the grisly specimens in thick set rows stood staring eternally at each other with lack-lustre eyes. All silent, breathless, and motionless as statues,—but how humiliating to look at in their shrunken and hollow parodies of life. Relics at once of human pride, and human impotence gathered into this Royal Museum of the King of Terrors. One vault is set apart expressly for the Capuchins themselves, so that all the fraternity from a remote period are assembled here in subterranean conclave,—each monk in his habit as he lived, with cowl, cord, and brown serge mantle. One of them had been an eloquent preacher in his day—“Revde Scto. D. Francesco Lobasto” was his name, and the date of his death was given, “Mori a 3 ; de 8 bre 1693.” His dress was old and rusty. The friar who showed me over opened it in front and exposed the skin, which was of the colour of brown parchment. Then he made me observe that the preacher’s tongue was unwasted,—and there was

certainly something in the mouth as thin and dry as a piece of caoutchouc. He took hold of it, and with a revolting leer made the leathern tongue click and rattle in the grinning jaws. "He was a great preacher in his lifetime, this one," said the Capuchin; "on a festa the church was crowded—all Palermo thronged to his Lenten sermons." These friars were sad wags. This was clearly a standard joke they were in the habit of playing off on the famous preacher, not being gifted probably with talents for oratory themselves.

Poor D. Fran. Lobasto standing up there so still and patient against the wall, with his brown wrinkled face under the cowl, and the poor shred of withered tongue vibrating at the coarse touch of the monk, was preaching a more impressive homily to all who had ears to hear than he had ever done in his lifetime.

We passed out of this into the general cemetery or rather bone-preserve, which contains miscellaneous specimens of mortality, and in which the men and the women occupy different crypts. Here are noblemen and knights, priests and citizens, all blackened, stiffened, glazed, the most mournful wreck of humanity that could be seen. One of these mocking phantoms had on the likeness of a kingly crown—or rather the skull, which was all that remained, was thus adorned. This was D. Filippo d'Austria, King of Tunis, who died "a 20; 7 bre 1622." In the great struggle with Death, Don Philip had lost his body, but preserved his diadem, and so with the old Spanish etiquette he takes princely rank in the realm of shadows.

The women's apartment in this strong and gloomy mansion is by a strange contrast as brilliant as a masquerade. On entering and beholding the silks, and velvets,

and gloves, and laces, and bracelets, and chains shining and sparkling in the subdued light of the crypt, the shock is painful, and one is tempted to exclaim, "O Death, what feast is toward in thine eternal halls?" Here are the guests gaily attired, jewelled, and perfumed—waiting, it would seem, till the minstrelsy begins to step forward and arrange themselves for the Dance of Death. There is a marchesa daintily arrayed and standing in a languishing attitude. You admire the marabout feather which droops so gracefully over her bonnet. Look closer and see the spectral semblance of a human face, which turns a sickening leer on you from within. O vanity of vanities! and these are holy sisters who died in consecrated virginity, and who seem scandalised at the boldness of those flaunting showy creatures among whom they find themselves. They also have their ornaments, their useless rosaries, and faded tinsel coronets to show they were the brides of heaven. Near them are maidens blasted in their budding womanhood, and who, doubtless, thought it a very stupid thing to be a nun—but the blooming girls and the ancient virgins are alike withered on their stalk, and must wear this revolting mask of life together till the heavens be no more. Amidst the bravery of the tinkling ornaments, mufflers, and mantles, and wimples, and crisping pins, I noted one touch of nature—a skeleton mother holding the hand of her skeleton child.

There is a chapel in these catacombs where masses are said on the day of All Souls for the repose of the dead who have been installed, one cannot say interred, here. It is the custom among the relatives of the deceased to show their affectionate regard to their memory by renewing on this solemn anniversary any article of their wearing apparel

that may be worn out—bonnets, gloves, scarfs—or dressing them up to the mark of the prevailing fashion, and making them fit to be seen. In all this there is a morbid and unwholesome state of feeling—a strange perversion of the relations that should subsist between the living and the dead.

The Capuchins clearly regard it more in the light of an attractive spectacle—a profitable show—than anything else. My guide in his woollen attire sauntered yawning through the crypts. He had seen it hundreds of times, and was evidently bored with it—only the thought of the gratuity supported him through the weary task. Now and then he stopped before one of the mummies, looked carefully into it as if it was a jar of pickled meats, and asked if it was not well preserved. Some of his companions, not having much to do, had followed us in, and were exchanging some commonplace remarks on the motives which brought so many Englishmen to the convent.

A disgraceful incident occurred some years since in these catacombs. The captain of an English merchant vessel visited them with a party in which there were some ladies. As the group stood before one of the figures that had been specially pointed out to them, it came into the captain's head to pin the skirt of one of the ladies to the shroud of a skeleton. Of course when the party moved away there was a movement and a scream, and a loose rattling of dry bones, as the poor empty kernel of a carcase was dragged down and fell forward on the stones. As may be imagined there was a scandal in the convent and town, and the English character was not in the least elevated in the opinion of the people by an act of thoughtless folly of which a malapert boy might have been ashamed. This is

one specimen of the practical jokes—the daring inventions of mischief—in which the foolish portion of our countrymen indulge in foreign parts, and which have earned for the whole nation the character of dangerous eccentricity.

What a contrast was there in the warm sunlight, and pure air, and sweet beauty, and redundant life of nature, when I emerged from the tombs. The ground on which I walked sounded hollow to my footfall, as if I had knowledge of a mine underneath full charged and ready to be sprung. It was as if one had been permitted to lift the veil from the face of that shadowy presence, and gaze into it for a moment. The transient glimpse was enough to subdue and chasten one's habitual thoughts. What would life be after all but a short and feverish agitation, but for that hope which is full of immortality—that divine assurance which has rolled away the stone from the sepulchres of all who sleep in Christ. Yet, I thought, rather let my ashes moulder into dust, and feed the tender grasses and daisies of the spring in some sequestered burial-place of my native land, than be coagulated into the ghastly caricature of life, and set upright through generations to be stared at and handled by the coarse hand of strangers, and to be for a sign and a wonder to living men. “Ashes to ashes, dust to dust,” is the law of our mortality. These corpses looked as though they would have defrauded the sister-worm. And as if some unhallowed arts had been used to keep them unwasted in the eyes of men, to rescue them from that sad dishonour and humiliation which must pass on all of us in the darkness and silence of the tomb, Death had taken his revenge, and exacted a heavier penalty. He has sealed the unnatural exemption of which they were

covetous by transforming them into hideous semblances of himself. He has granted them perpetual tenure of the forms they sometimes wore, but with such conditions as make corruption and decay a boon. Far rather let our dead be buried out of our sight than be dragged from the sacred stillness in which they rest under the shadow of God, and stationed in a more frightful guise than the sear and fleshless skeleton at the feast of life. The "fair young German gentleman," of whom Jeremy Taylor speaks in his noble sermon on death, could scarcely have been more painful to look on, when at his own request his picture was drawn after he had been dead four days, and so hung up among those of his armed ancestors.

"So shall the fairest face appear
When youth and years are flown,
Such is the robe that kings must wear
When death has reft their crown."

CHAPTER VI.

HAMPSTEAD.

HAVING completed his pleasant but solitary tour, on the 29th of September 1852, Mr Burns once more landed in Madeira. He found the island in mourning. The vintage had failed. A mysterious and unprecedented visitation had swept over the vine-yards, and not only did the grapes of that season fall rotten to the ground, but the trees themselves were so blighted that for years the staple trade of the island was extinguished. At the same time another source of gain was cut off from the inhabitants; for other climates began to find favour with the physicians of England, and the yearly influx of invalids was greatly diminished. Those who came did their utmost in the way of relieving the distress of the famishing people, and accomplished more for their preservation than the crowds of penitents who perambulated the streets, dragging heavy chains, carrying crowns of thorns, and calling on the great goddess of the Madeirans to witness the misery of her children. To Mr Burns there was a special trial in the lessened number of his parishioners, and the smaller

company which Sabbath by Sabbath waited on his ministrations ; and as that dreary season drew to a close, his thoughts reverted with new desire to his native country.

Accordingly, in the summer of 1853, he set forth on a new stage of his pilgrimage. During the autumn he officiated in the Presbyterian Church at Brighton, and in the following year in the Free Church at St Helier's, Jersey. In either place the people would have been happy to secure his permanent services, but he still shrank from any formal settlement. As he remarked to a friend, the Rev. Dr Chalmers of London, "in preaching he always felt as if a sword hung over his head ;" and whenever a call was spoken of, the dread of a sudden down-break, necessitating a resignation and renewing the sorrowful leave-takings of Dunblane, rose up to his imagination with morbid vividness, and set the proposal instantly aside.

At this time, however, there was a vacancy in the Presbyterian Church at Hampstead, and there were considerations which made it look a more likely field for an enfeebled labourer than any other which had yet presented itself. Nor was it a small attraction that one of the leading office-bearers was a friend in all things like-minded, and on whose delicate and generous sympathy he could at all times rely. The unanimous invitation of the people was accepted, and although "in weakness, and fear, and much trembling," on the 22d of May 1855, Mr Burns commenced his

second stated pastorate. Although the bright and hopeful outset at Dunblane could not be repeated, on the whole they were ten happy years which Mr Burns spent at Hampstead. The congregation was not numerous, but it contained a large proportion of earnest and attentive worshippers. Their week-day requirements did not overtask his strength, and in preparing for the Sabbath it was pleasant to anticipate an audience who could appreciate beautiful thought and varied instruction, and on whom his tender and affectionate exhortations were never thrown away. In many of their abodes, as well as in the houses of ministers and friends outside, he found an agreeable retreat and congenial society ; and whilst a certain amount of seclusion was secured by a suburban residence, London was close at hand: the working London with its inspiring life, the student's London with its well-stored libraries. Of outward anxieties few came on him except such as are involved in the faithful discharge of the Christian ministry ; and of his daily walks a large portion lay along “paths of pleasantness.” Each Monday morning he gave a Bible lesson to the inmates of a large reformatory, and in the success of his instructions he had much to cheer him. The week evening service in his own church was a great enjoyment ; and to his expansive unsectarian spirit, most welcome and refreshing were the united prayer-meetings held in the “iron room” of his friend, the Rev. E. Bickersteth of Christ Church. From Missionary Committees and Presbytery meet-

ings seldom absent, there was a friendly gathering of his brethren on the second Tuesday of each month, in which he especially delighted. The hour was early, and his residence was remote, but he was seldom absent. The first business was breakfast, with that free and familiar talk in which both wit and wisdom welled over, and in which his social disposition came out as well as a rich appreciation of humour. Still more did he shine in the serious conversation which followed, when the details of ministerial duty and other practical questions were discussed after the fashion of that Eclectic Society of which Archdeacon Pratt has preserved the charming memorial. Mr Burns's contribution was always thoughtful and apposite, and marked by rare maturity of mind. It ought to be added, that he seldom or never made his feeble health a reason for declining those labours to which he was called by his brethren. For many years the college enjoyed his services as one of its Board of Examiners. It was an office for which he was admirably qualified. His classical and philosophical acquisitions had never rusted, and instead of posing young men with hard or peculiar questions, it was always his aim to bring out the scholarship which they actually possessed. In the discussions of church courts he seldom took a part, but speeches which he delivered in the Synod in connexion with its Foreign Mission are still remembered for their pathetic earnestness, as well as his address, on the day of his ordination, to the Rev. W.

S. Swanson, now labouring in China. Notwithstanding his natural fluency, and a fine command of expressive diction, all such appearances were an effort.

For the following sketch of Mr Burns, as he was to be seen and heard at Hampstead, we are indebted to one whose fine feeling and beautiful creations are the yearly charm of countless readers, and who, in common with other lovers of the good and true, found delight in his quiet, unobtrusive ministry:—

“ You ask me to set down for you any recollections that may occur to me of my dear friend and minister, Mr Burns. It is little I can do; for besides having a strong objection to almost all biographies and personal reminiscences, I have few data to go upon. Though I was for some years a member of his congregation at Hampstead — and therefrom arose a very sincere regard between us — still, from his busy life and mine, our opportunities of meeting were so rare that we had no chance of becoming really intimate. I call him my friend because in truth he was such; one never to be forgotten. Still, many at Hampstead knew him far better than I did. It is possible, however, that this more distant vision may make me see and describe him more clearly and fairly than if I had been in nearer intercourse with him, which would have made writing about him, or judging him from an extraneous point of view, all but impossible. Even as it is, I find it difficult enough; there is such a sacredness about the person-

ality of such a man ; and besides, he was one of those who are never thoroughly known until lost ; that is, by the world at large. But his congregation at Hampstead felt, each and all, as if not only their minister, but a son and brother, had gone from them when he died.

“ I had best do what you desire by giving you, very simply, my own relations with him, such as they were.

“ One Sunday morning, being newly settled at Hampstead, and casting about for a place of worship, preferring the Presbyterian form, but not bound to it, since it is the weak point of Presbyterianism that the value of its services depend mainly on the minister,—I went, almost accidentally, into that old building at Well Walk, which has seen so many vicissitudes of occupation, sacred and secular. A bare, chilly, rather gloomy, and yet peaceful-looking place, rather a comfort than not, compared with the fashionable London churches and indifferent London congregations. Here there was no difficulty in getting a seat, and a small number of quiet attentive hearers were scattered thinly among the high, old-fashioned, and much dilapidated pews.

“ In the pulpit I saw a dark-haired, aquiline featured man, neither young nor old, with a modest bearing, and a remarkably touching voice,—a voice such as I never heard in any other clergyman, save one, whom, with much theological difference, in personal character and influence he strongly resembled

—Frederic Denison Maurice. Both from that and from his countenance you felt at once that he had had that teaching which alone qualifies a man to teach. He understood sorrow, and he was in earnest. Whether or not you believed what he said, you might be quite sure that he believed it, and acted upon it. Also there was in him that rarest thing in all preachers and public speakers—a total absence of self-consciousness. He stood there, simply delivering his Master's message ; thinking not of himself at all, or of the effect he was producing, but only of his message, and of his Master.

“I forget what the sermon was about, or whether I agreed with it entirely or not ; but indeed the great comfort of Mr Burns's sermons was that they were not ‘doctrinal.’ Still the individuality of the preacher made such a strong impression on me that as I went out I asked his name, and if he were the regular minister. Finding he was, I took sittings in his church, I believe, the very next day.

“From that time I was rarely absent a Sunday, and never without regret ; for the service, so simple and solemn, was after the purest form of Presbyterianism, and the sermon was what one so rarely gets in any church,—something to rest on, to carry away with one, to think of at intervals afterwards. It helped to make the Lord's day really the Lord's day, to be looked forward to during the other days of the busy and often barren week. Not that it was at all a showy discourse. Mr Burns was the very antipode of the ‘popular preacher.’ His delivery was simple

in the extreme, even more so than it afterwards became ; for with failing lungs he got a way of straining his voice rather unnaturally. Then, it was an exquisite natural voice ; low, but exceedingly distinct ; more like talking than preaching, which deepened tenfold the effect of what he said.

“ Every Sunday I heard him deepened my appreciation of him as a minister ; and when I came gradually to know himself and feel that ‘the minister’ was only the sure outcome of the man, the instinctive attraction deepened into a rational esteem, and a warmth of regard, which every one of his flock had for him in a remarkable degree. He possessed—as Mr Maurice does—that strong personal influence without which pulpit eloquence is a mere outside show ; and yet he was eloquent, too, in his way. In an intellectual and literary sense, his sermons were always good, often really very fine, clearly thought out, and gracefully and poetically worded ; but the spirit of them made one think secondarily of the form. And his prayers—in many Presbyterian and Nonconformist churches so lamentable an exhibition—not prayer at all, but a mere haranguing of the Almighty, or declaiming didactically to the congregation—were here the most beautiful and comforting portion of the service. Brief, simple, reverent ; it was like a child beseeching a Father for himself and for his brethren ; humble and adoring, yet certain of being heard.

“ As I have said, his sermons were more practical and emotional than doctrinal ; and however sincerely

he held the dogmas of his Church, he had a wide liberality towards those who differed from him. I remember my first long conversation with him was on the subject of an approaching communion, in which he wished me to join. I told him that before applying for a token I felt it only right and honest to explain that I was not a strict Presbyterian, that I could no more subscribe to the Scotch Confession of Faith than to the English Thirty-nine Articles ; perhaps even less so. If he or any one asked me what I was, I could only answer (I hoped) 'a Christian.'

"' Well,' said he ; and I can now vividly recall both his look and his words, as we walked up and down the sunshiny garden, where the infinitely diverse leaves were all budding out together, each after its kind, and the numberless birds were every one singing a different song, though the combined harmony seemed like a universal psalm of spring,—' Well, what more can you, or I, or any one say, but that we are Christians ? I accept you, and I believe that God will do so too. Come.' So I came.

" Of all the impressions left by the services in that dear old dilapidated church at Well Walk, the strongest to me at least is that of our tri-monthly communion. It differed a little from communion services in Scotland, in being far shorter and simpler. That lengthy address called 'fencing the tables' Burns entirely omitted,* nor were there any regular

* In form. In substance he made no deviation from the practice of Evangelical Presbyterians in dispensing the Lord's Supper.

‘tables’ at all. The communicants all remained in their pews, and after the sermon was ended, and the ordinary congregation had departed, there was an address and a prayer, always by our minister himself, he never had any extraneous help, as the custom is in Scotland. Then his elders went round with the bread and wine, not to successive tables, but to the whole of the communicants at once. Afterwards, another prayer and a few earnest words, coming from the heart of the minister they loved to the hearts of his people, and the service was ended.

“ Now that all that is over—the very church itself become, I think, a soldiers’ drill-yard—and the pastor, whose strong personal influence was an abiding bond of union among the little congregation, gone away to keep an eternal Sabbath, many of us will recollect tenderly those peaceful Sundays, but especially the communion Sundays, when, coming out from the gray building into the soft green shadows of Well Walk, we stopped for many a church-door greeting—many a friendly company of twos or threes, according as our paths led us across the heath, discussing the sermon, not critically, but affectionately and enjoyingly, and talking over what was to us all a matter of most vital interest, the health and looks and general well-being of ‘the minister.’

“ This his feebleness of constitution, and our knowledge that for years his life had hung on a thread, that even now he was only lent to us as it were, and

might break down at any time, deepened, if possible, the hold which Mr. Burns had upon the hearts of his little flock. His elders, strong hearty men, treated him with the tenderness and consideration that they would have shown to a woman ; and the women, the mothers, watched his looks every Sunday as anxiously as if he had been a son of their own. When he married, and was safely sheltered in that best love of all, there was not one of us who did not rejoice as over one of our own kindred.

“ Of our minister’s private relations with his congregation there are many to speak ; for he went continually among them all. He was not of those who think the pulpit duty enough ; he entered as a dear friend into every house, and in none, under any circumstances, was he ever known to show himself, under colour of his cloth, either harsh or dictatorial. It was impossible, for he was the humblest man alive. The poorest of his people gained as much of him as the richest ; and he spoke as gently to any little Reformatory girl in the establishment in Church Row, as he would have done to the greatest magnate in the land. I do not know—I never heard—whether he was of gentle birth or not, but he was essentially, and to the very core a gentleman.

“ Also, he was a man of very cultivated intellect. Whether his talents amounted to actual genius or not, they were not far below it ; and he had in all things that intense appreciation of the beautiful, which, had fortune made him a rich man, would

have made him also a man of taste and letters. As it was, he had no time for more than ordinary ministerial work, except the verses which he wrote occasionally. They, as well as his sermons, demonstrate one fact, that whatever he did was done thoroughly. With all his delicacy of health, there was nothing slip-shod or careless in either his prose or poetry. His work was worked out thoroughly and consecutively to the very end.

“My last interview with him was a visit, made under circumstances not likely either to be detailed or forgotten. Therein he spoke, from various reasons, more of himself than was customary with him, for it was curious and beautiful how little he ever put forward his own personality. I remember his saying that to him death had no strangeness, no fear ; he had looked it in the face for so many years, fully aware that every year was so much granted to him, which he had no right to count on or expect. And though in the keen happiness of his present life he enjoyed every day and hour, still it was only by the day and by the hour ; he held everything with so loose a hold, knowing that at any time might come his Master’s call. And then he knelt down and prayed, thanking God for the departed, that they had entered into peace, and praying for the living that they might be taught to wait patiently until summoned to follow them.

“ Few and simple words—as indeed all his prayers were—but they carried with them a wonderful peace

and calm, as if spoken by a voice out of the unknown country, which to him seemed so well-known and near. That ‘sure and certain hope’ of immortality, that faith which seems actually to realise the one great mystery, dark to every eye but faith’s alone—‘the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting’—I never saw so clear and strong in any human being as in him this day. As he went away walking slowly down the garden with his feeble step, and thin stooping figure, turning back at the gate with a bright smile, at once a benediction and a farewell, I said to myself, ‘I know I shall never see you again in this world.’ I never did.

“Of his last year of pastoral labour, his final illness and death, I can say nothing, for I was away, and only heard occasional tidings second-hand. When I came back he had long been laid to sleep in Highgate cemetery—at least so much of him as death could keep. But I never revisit Hampstead without thinking of him as not dead but living, in the cheerful, happy life which he undoubtedly had, in spite of all physical suffering, and especially after his most fortunate and perfect marriage. Above all, I think of him in the life eternal, strong and bright and active, still, I doubt not, in some wondrous celestial way, made to continue his service of the Master whom he loved; enjoying to the full that kingdom of heaven which for him was assuredly begun on earth—for he had it, as Christ says, ‘within’ him.

"This is all I can think of to say about my minister. Accept it such as it is."

The "old building in Well Walk" was eventually replaced by the capacious and costly structure, which, of ecclesiastical edifices, is one of the first to meet the stranger approaching Hampstead from London. Of the toil and trouble usually attendant on church building, Mr Burns had small experience. The greater portion of the expense was defrayed by the munificence of individuals, and with a wise diffidence in his architectural skill he left in more practical hands the superintendence of the work when in progress. One thing alone occasioned pain and disappointment. The eligible site for the intended erection belonged to the Dean and Chapter of Westminster. Mr Burns was not unknown to Dr Trench, and, besides living peaceably with their Episcopalian neighbours, the leading members of the congregation had many of them been large contributors to Church of England charities. It was therefore with full confidence in the generosity of a sister communion that the congregation sought to lease or purchase from their wealthy neighbour a few roods of ground ; but the repeated request was refused, and a needless expenditure of two thousand five hundred pounds was imposed on the members of Trinity Presbyterian Church.

This new church was opened on Friday, the 21st of November 1862, when sermons were preached by the Rev. Dr Guthrie of Edinburgh, and the Rev. W.

Brock of London. On the following Lord's day Mr Burns delivered the appropriate discourse, which will be found in the latter part of this volume.*

Amongst the employments of Hampstead must not be forgotten a certain amount of literary labour. With his fine culture and fluent pen it might have been expected that authorship would be his favourite pursuit; but, if the truth must be told, he never found any pleasure in writing for the press. As far back as the days of Dunblane, on a Sabbath evening when public worship was over, and "the burden of the 'Lord'" no longer pressed on his spirit, like a flower which comes up, or a life which comes forth where a great stone has been rolled away, there would rise up into his mind some beautiful thought or hallowed memory, and, shaped into a hymn or sacred sonnet, it would find place in his portfolio beside kindred compositions. But the toil of revision was exceedingly irksome, all the rather that no amount of painstaking could bring his verses up to his own standard of excellence. In 1854, under the title, not very prepossessing, "The Vision of Prophecy, and other Poems," he collected and published a volume. It attracted no great notice from the general public, but it at once secured for the author a high place in the ranks of Christian minstrelsy. Invitations came to him from publishers and editors which, had he accepted them, would have gone far to fill up all his time; but to authorship he greatly preferred the

stated labours of the ministry, and as it was only by sitting up far into the night that he could prepare "copy" for the printer, he was the more careful to avoid anything of the nature of a literary commitment. To the "Encyclopaedia Britannica" he contributed a short article on Hymns, and for the "Family Treasury," edited by his friend the Rev. Andrew Cameron, he wrote, among other things, a series of papers, interesting and suggestive, on "The Cities of the Bible," and a most discriminating and admirable notice, in several parts, of the Life of Edward Irving. Whilst at Hampstead he also published two little volumes of meditations, interspersed with devotional poetry, "The Heavenly Jerusalem; or, Glimpses within the Gate," and "The Evening Hymn."

In the poetry of Mr Burns there was nothing to secure a wide or sudden popularity. It had neither that splendour which at first glance takes the eye, nor that strong originality which provokes criticism, and is either fiercely blamed or rapturously applauded, nor that quaintness and mannerism which enlists the support of a coterie. In point of fact, also, there were embraced in this first volume a few pieces hardly likely to live; pieces distinguished by no special felicity either of thought, feeling, or diction, and revealing the touch of the 'prentice-hand rather than that of one who had mastered his poetical implements. The book took its chief designation from "The Vision of Prophecy," a poem which hardly satisfies the expectations awakened by its name, and which deals

with a subject on which well-intentioned feebleness, and loquacious, half-honest presumption, have had so much to say, that men of sense look upon it with a very mingled feeling. Such as it was, however, "The Vision of Prophecy" could not fail to influence the estimate formed of Mr Burns's volume by hasty readers,—that is to say, by ninety-nine readers in the hundred. Few critics will suspect that an author has done himself injustice in giving prominence to a particular specimen of his workmanship. The majority, if they find this to be defective, are not likely to correct their first impressions of the book by a candid and complete examination of its contents. There is no difficulty, therefore, in accounting for the fact that "The Vision of Prophecy, and other Poems" failed to obtain loud commendation, or to attract general notice. But there were a few who perceived—what the book under all deductions conclusively proved—that the writer was a man of fine genius, and that, if he possessed the physical stamina indispensable to severe and protracted intellectual effort, he might enrich the literature of his country, not only with a few exquisite pieces, but with poems of an important size, and of a rare and high order.

He evidently possessed a true imaginative faculty. From seer-like sternness to pensive tenderness, his mind ranged through all poetic moods. As an illustration of the former take these lines:—

"Pelusium, whose glories in decay
Gorged the lean desert with a splendid prey."

There is a haggard and terrible grandeur in the conception of the ruin of a magnificent city as a skeleton prey, around which the hungry desert glares. With this contrast what follows—

The lowly spirit God hath consecrated
As His abiding rest ;
And angels by some patriarch's tent have waited,
When kings had no such guest.

The dew that never wets the flinty mountain
Falls in the valley free ;
Bright verdure fringes the small desert fountain,
But barren sand the sea.

Only an imagination characterised alike by power and by delicacy could have produced both the first of these passages and the last.

In the way of easy, finished, concise description, these two verses are masterly :—

Wooed by the ruffling airs of spring,
The stork forsakes her Syrian clime,
And, true to her appointed time,
Cleaves the blue air with nimble wing,

To lands where Gothic minsters tear
With spears of stone the trailing cloud,
And marble statues o'er the crowd
Look steadfast in the sultry square.

The second stanza might be mistaken for Tennyson's.

Here is a landscape in two lines, and if you look well you will find that both in colour and in drawing it is perfect :—

From the rich flush of garden and woodland, the eye
Roamed up to blue ridges cut sharp in the sky.

In a description of early summer dawn we have this,—

Afar, a soft blue film, a trembling bloom
Of light was on the landscape.

It would have taken the brush of Turner in his tenderest hour to realise on canvas that “trembling bloom,” but Turner would have liked to try it. Beautiful in feeling, in thought, and in language, are the following stanzas on the Vesper Hour. The scene is evidently Madeira :—

A rosy light the eastern sky is steeping,—
The ripple on the sea has died away
To a low murmur,—and the ships are sleeping
Each on its glassy shadow on the bay :
The young moon’s golden shell over the hill
Trembles with lustre, and the trees are still.

The air grows clearer, and her amice blue
The gentle Twilight hath about her cast,
And from her silver urn she sprinkles dew :
Silence and Sleep, twin sisters, follow fast
Her soundless sandals, and where’er she goes
Day-wearied nature settles to repose.

Hark ! the clear bell from that tall convent-tower
Hath sounded,—and, or e’er its echoes die,
Another chime hath rung the vesper hour,—
A farther and a fainter makes reply ;
Till far and near the soft appeal to prayer
With music fills the undulating air.

Ye sweet-voiced bells, ring on ! Though at your call
I may not breathe in prayer a creature’s name,
Yet on my heart more touching memories fall,
And ye remind me of a holier claim,—
His, whose undrooping eye alone can keep
Watch over His beloved as they sleep.

Delicately finished also, and vivid in its word-painting, is the little piece entitled "A Bird's Christmas Carol." A pensive sweetness, a tender gaiety, a melodious influence as of smiles breaking through tears, breathes in its stanzas.

When Spring round yonder lime-tree bare
Its tent of silken leafage flung,
A homeless bird found shelter there,
And in the green seclusion sung.

On dewy dawns and rose-red eves,
In sun and shower, the summer long,
That little voice, amid the leaves,
Sent up its jet of silver song.

And when the Autumn woodland wore
The crimson flush of slow decay,
It warbled sweetly as before,
Nor faltered all the waning day.

Two wrinkled leaves upon the lime
Now mourn their kindred in the mould,
Their summer-guest comes many a time,
And cheers them with a song of old.

Methinks a pensive undertone
Now trembles through the blither strain,
A memory of the summer gone,
A wish for summer back again.

Of such remembrance Hope is born,
And through that music floats a chime
Of echoes from the April morn,
And whispers of the primrose time.

It was with the eye and heart of a poet that Mr Burns looked upon nature, and none of his poems are more characteristic of his genius than those in which some beautiful aspect of nature is delineated. The

tender music of his language seems to give the picture voice. One more example in this kind we cannot help quoting; it is the description of an evening scene.

Over the hill-edge ripples the warm light,
One level ray along the sprouting vines
Gleams like a seraph's spear. The dusky lines
Of the far woods grow shapeless on the height,
Where the slow mists fold up their fleeces white,
Now flecked with purple. O'er that cloud of pines
The sky to clearest spirit of air refines,
And a star settles trembling on the sight.
Cool winds are rustling downwards to the seas,
To worn, homefaring men benignly given.
From the soft glooms of church-encircling trees,
Fast darkening in the shadows of the even,
The small bells sprinkle pensive cadences,
And Earth is peacefully atoned with Heaven !

Dwell upon these verses, word by word, line by line, and you will perceive not only that they are imbued with the very soul of poetry, but that their writer had attained to rare mastery in the art of poetic execution.

Deep in the nature of Mr Burns lay what some would hardly have expected, a true and exquisite vein of humour. The few who knew him intimately in private are aware that, held in reserve by the earnestness, the tenderness, and the humble piety, which never left him for a moment, a bright wit, instinct with shrewdness and hearty pith, was always ready to flash out. Clear and keen in all his perceptions, he had a quick eye for humour of character, and for the lights and shades of laughter which

flutter about human affairs. The epigrammatic lines into which he translated the genial saying of Alfonso of Arragon, quoted above,* could not be surpassed for arch felicity. With a little more of the acid in them—not a drop too much—these four lines, on Alexander weeping because he had no more worlds to conquer, are nearly as good :—

What ! no more worlds to conquer ? Weep no more,—
Look inward, and thy heart will show thee one :
Or doubly weep, thy folly to deplore,
That this first conquest is not yet begun !

Characteristic also is the little piece entitled “The Bird and the Bee.” A certain aroma of quiet fun and gentlest sarcasm pervades it. It is a protest, rather suggested than expressed, against the genius of starched and formal propriety, and the self-admiring virtue of the oppressively good.

The bird is your true poet. I have seen him,
When the snow wrapped his seeds, and not a crumb
Was in his larder, perch upon a branch,
And sing from his brave heart a song of trust
In Providence, who feeds him though he sows not,
Nor gathers into barns. Whate'er his fears
Or sorrows be, his spirit bears him up.
Cares ne'er o'ermaster him, for 'tis his wont
To stifle them with music. Out of sight
He buries them in the depth of his sweet song,
And gives them a melodious sepulture.
He teaches me philosophy,—yea, more,
He leads me up to faith.

Your busy bee
No favourite is of mine. There is no music

In that monotonous hum. To me it seems
A trumpet, which the little Pharisee
Sounds, that the common people of the field
May well regard his industry, and mark
How he improves the sunshine. Even that song
Dies with the flowers; for when the dreary days
Of winter come, he folds his wing to lie
In his luxurious halls, and there amidst
His magazines of daintiest food, and vaults
Brimming with luscious amber-coloured wine,
The spiritless sluggard dreams away his hours;
Or if he wake, 'tis but to gorge himself
In solitude with the rich cloying fare
Of an exclusive feast. His hospitality
No stranger ever shares. Heedless he sees
His mates of summer droop and starve before
His frozen gates. He revels deep within;
Without they die: yet the small misanthrope
Shall guard his treasures with a surly sting!

Humour and pathos have almost always gone together in minds of genius. The sad and the ludicrous cross each other in the chequered network of life. The elements of playfulness and genial sarcasm which lay in Burns were never developed in their strength, but the mournful circumstances of his personal history kept him ever conscious of the sorrow which mingles in human mirth. A profound pathos, therefore, is one of the prevailing moods of his poetry. Sometimes it is his own great anguish—genius and the ardour of a sacred ambition in long, hopeless conflict with disease—that is heard in the melodious wailing of his lyre. More frequently the pathos of his spirit finds expression in tender, tearful commemoration of the agony of

some other heart, mingling with the shows of gladness. The following sonnet, recording, in words of stern simplicity and tragic power, his own grief, is but one of many pieces in which the same sad note 's struck :—

My grief pursues me through the land of sleep,
It winds into the secret of my dreams,
And shapes their shadowy pomp. When fancy seems
To charm my fever'd spirit into deep
Forgetfulness, the restless thought will creep
From its dim ambush, startling that repose,
And glooms and spectral terrors round me close,
Like iron walls I may not overleap.
And then I seem to see thy face again,
But not, belovèd ! as thou wert and art,
And, with thy sweet voice tingling in my brain,
From this great agony of fear I start,
To feel the slow throb of habitual pain,
And undull'd anguish grasping at my heart.

The friend here alluded to was a lady, between whom and Mr Burns there existed, during his residence in Madeira, the closest Christian friendship. She has since died. He addressed to her after she had left him a few stanzas, in which “sorrow is ennobled by the hope full of immortality, and the regrets of natural tenderness are sanctified into holy submission.”

The memory of thy truth to me
My heart will ne'er resign,
Until, beloved ! mine shall be
As cold a bed as thine.
High o'er my path of life it will
Hang ever as a star,

To cheer my steps toward the hill
Where the immortal are.

The lesson of thy gentle life,
Thy trials meekly borne,
Will keep me hopeful in the strife
When fainting and outworn ;
Then, for a darker hour remains
The memory of the faith
That triumph'd over mortal pains,
And calmly fronted death.

I once had hoped that side by side
Our journey we might go,
And with a perfect love divide
Our gladness and our woe ;
But thou hast reach'd thy Father's home,
And happier thou art there
Than I, left wearily to roam
Through days of grief and care.

Though all is chang'd since thou art gone,
I would not wish thee here,
For rather would I weep alone
Than see thee shed a tear ;
The thought of thy great happiness,
Is now a part of mine ;
Nor would I wish my sorrow less
To see that sorrow thine.

Of his pathos in its less personal application, the graceful and animated stanzas suggested by a village festival present suitable illustration.

The bells ring out,—the villagers
Are keeping feast to-day,
Gay groups are winding through the vines
In pilgrim-like array,—
Some singing to the viols shrill
That tinkle on the way.

The banner on the chapel-tower
Droops down the flag-staff tall,
The shadows of the leafy planes
Are quivering round the wall,
And the spirit of a joyous time
Is brooding over all.

But pain and sorrow tread behind
The dancing steps of joy ;
Some shadow hovering dark will oft
Life's brightest hour alloy :
Hard by the careless throng, I see
A mother with her boy.

She sits before her cottage door,
Beneath a shady vine,
In vain to her the music sounds,
In vain the sun doth shine ;
She only sees her little child
In mortal sickness pine.

He lieth moaning on her knee,
While she would soothe his pain,
There is fever seething in the blood,
And throbbing in the vein ;
Alas ! that little wasted cheek
Will never bloom again.

His voice no more at noon and eve
Will ring beside the hearth,
No more his laugh her heavy heart
Will lighten with its mirth ;
His little joys have lain, alas !
Within a narrow girth.

Soon will a sad array be seen
Slow-winding down the dell,
Before the priest the surpliced boy
Will swing his funeral bell ;
And the people at their doors will say,
" 'Tis little Manuel ! "

Wherefore, with vacant eye she sees
 The folk pass to and fro,
She looks, but heeds not who they be,
 Nor how they come and go ;
She only feels upon her heart
 The clutch of deadly woe.

In after days, when of this feast
 She hears the neighbours tell,
She will be silent, but the time
 She will remember well ;
“That summer,” she will think, “I lost
 My darling Manuel !”

To her this grief will be a date
 Through all the coming years,
A pillar on her way, to which
 She will often turn her tears ;
How many such a monument
 Along life’s path appears !

For the traces left by joy are faint,
 His step is light and free ;
But the footprints of our suffering,
 So deeply stamped they be,
That they never wear out from the sands
 Of wreck-strewn memory.

Peculiarly interesting, both on account of its high intrinsic merit, and because of the affinity in natural genius between the men, is Mr Burns’s poem on Wordsworth. Burns declares Wordsworth to be his “latest and not least-loved guide,” and pronounces him “the true and master-poet of our time.” There was a period, he tells us, when the witching colour and impassioned melody of Tennyson captivated his heart ; but the spell was broken ; and as his mind reached maturity, he became confirmed in his allegi-

ance to the bard of Rydal. Meditation and sympathy were in Burns more powerful than passion, and the meditative sympathy of Wordsworth, pervading nature, and tenderly penetrating her mysteries, seemed to him to endow that poet's readers with "a finer sense," revealing constantly a more deep and subtle charm in the forms and aspects of the physical world. The voices of nature seemed to him to haunt Wordsworth's song as wind among the forest leaves.

It was as if, while straying far and lone
Through a wide desert, I had suddenly
Found a green valley folded in fair hills,
And in the midst a fresh and lucid pool,
In whose unwrinkled deeps each little spire
Of grass, each tuft of rushes, and each rock
Moss-stained that overhung it, had most clear
Reflection, with the statelier images
Of tree and girdling mountain. There I since
Have tarried willingly, still finding joy
And solace in that unpolluted air.

In vigorous and beautiful language, and with precise and exhaustive truth, both critical and philosophic, he brings out the distinctive merit, charm, and power of Wordsworth as compared with the famous representatives of the satanic and sensual schools of poetry. The passage is long, but it is worth its space; for there is perhaps no other to be found within the compass of Mr Burns's writings, by which we are enabled to take more exactly the measure of the man in intellect, in culture, in feeling, and in moral tone.

Enough we had, more than enough, of wild
And gloomy portraiture,—proud spirits driven
To frenzy by their passions, foaming out
Their shame,—minds whose depravity became
An inspiration, breathing through despair,
And clothing blasphemy with burning words.
There vice made men heroic,—life appeared
A masquerade of phantoms, raised above
Our mortal stature, who, with devilish wails
From under their dark vizors, and anon
With devilish laughter, raved across its stage.

There came the sated sensualist, well-skilled
In self-anatomy, on whose thin lips
The bitterness of a bad heart frothed up
In sneers ; with him, the sceptic, nobly-born,
But wretched, through whose strange soliloquies
Faltered some guilty secret, that might throw
A charm of mystery round his blighted youth.
Nor were there wanting outlaws, and self-spurned
Apostates, who, in ruin, still retained
Some mild redeeming virtue,—who could lead
Reckless and stormy lives, and trample shame
And honour under foot, and shout for joy
Through the dun smoke of battle, yet recall
Their fiery spirits, when their hawk-like flight
Was in its highest circle, to the lure
Of love ; for love was linked with all, and threw
Its bland enchantment over scenes of blood.
Then the scene shifted to the chime of sweet
Voluptuous numbers,—gorgeous visions flushed
The odour-steaming air, rich stained lights,
And silken draperies, and lutes that breathed
A slumberous music to a damsel's tale,—
A lovelorn maiden, passing fair, who clung
To some strong, desperate nature, with a fond
Fidelity, as the green plant twines round
A blasted tree.

And this was human life !
Such was its inward struggle, such its griefs
And joys—for such our sympathies were claimed :

For wickedness that dragged its secret shame
Before the world,—for suffering that raised
Its selfish wail, unhumbled for the guilt
That caused it,—for despair which, from its depths,
At Heaven still hurled defiance,—and for pride
That bore its curse in sullen self-retreat,
And unrepenting bared its Cain-like brow.

Thus to its highest heaven could song exalt
All that was false, unnatural, and vile.

Out of this faint and sickly atmosphere,
This strife of hateful passion, thou wert first
To lead us into pure and liberal air.
Thy skilful hand was first to find the chord
To which the heart responded,—from it drew
Mysterious harmonies, and struck it till
The mild vibration, drowned at first, rose clear,
Like some sweet, silvery voice, over the din
Of clamorous instruments. It held the time
Charmed by its mere simplicity, that made
A silence for itself, till all around
Its echoes multiplied and filled the land.
The freshness of the vernal woods possessed
Thy stately numbers,—sounds of summer-hills,—
The goings of the wind in the close tops
Of trees,—the bubbling of the brook, that seems
To the old man's heart a voice from far-off days
Of childhood,—and from these its tones of strength
And tenderness it drew. So thou stoodst forth
The interpreter of Nature to the mind,
To teach us all that lay beneath her sounds
And silences, her changes and repose,
The mystery of her kindredness with man,—
The likeness of a human face beneath
The veil of Isis, answering smiles and tears ;
An aspect shifting to our every mood ;
A beating heart that presses up to ours
In concord : to explain what we had felt
In hours of tranquil thought, but wanted words
To utter, and were glad without the will
To trace the hidden well-spring of our joy.

'Twas thine, like some hierophant, to show
The fine relations which, unto the mind,
Invest the universe with glory and light
Unknown to sense ; to make the soul infuse
Its own life into nature's lifeless forms,
And then, receiving what it gave, to move
Among them as its thoughts ; to take them up
Into its very substance, and evoke,
Where'er it turned, clear shapes and images
Of its emotions, flushed with fancy's hues.
Thus, interpenetrated by the mind,
The simplest scenes and pleasures to thy glance
Were beautified ; and not a lonely bird
From whose small heritage of song thy soul
Was not enriched, and not a woodland flower
Over which thou, full-hearted, didst not stoop
And give it benediction. The blue smoke
Curling from cottage roofs awoke the sense
Of sympathy within thee with the life
Beneath. It spoke to thee of humble men,
Their trials and their sorrows, the hard strife
Of poverty, the daily round of toil,
The anxieties of sickness, clouded days,
Slow darkening to death. The gleams of joy
With which the meanest lot is brightened, made
Thee glad, and all its genial virtues found
With thee their celebration. Thus thy art
Stood singular, like some pure instrument
Or temple-pipe reserved for lofty themes,
To chant, in solemn tones, the nobleness
Of love, and trust, and patience ; to expound
The law of kindness, the calm power which dwells
In virtue and in gentleness ; to show
The heroism of a life which walks
With meek endurance in its separate path
Of suffering, and the loveliness of hope,
And home-bred innocence, and simple truth.
And hence the freedom, purity, and glow,
That gave thy verse its charm. Its voice was strong
And musical, as of the sounds that haunt

The hills ; its movement graceful in the joy
Of overflowing life, its bloom the healthy flush
And freshness ministered by moorland winds
And bracing mountain air. Through all its veins
Health's glad unconscious pulses rose and fell,—
The beating of a manly heart was heard.

In relation to the sensual and blasphemous poetry which has been so much in vogue in the present century, this on Wordsworth may be pronounced not only true, but the whole truth. Whether Wordsworth himself was not defective on the side of passionate fervour, and that burning human sympathy which characterises the highest order of poets, is another question. No such suggestion of critical scepticism occurred to Mr Burns, but he takes grave exception to the poetry of Wordsworth on another ground. After the eloquent recognition of his claims just quoted, he proceeds :—

Such are thy well-earned honours ; high, compared
With those inherited from powers debased,
And genius that could stoop to be the slave
Of sensual passion. It was well to lead
A wildered age back to the love and truth
Of uncorrupted nature. Yet renown
Still higher, which thou mightst have claimed and won,
Is wanting. There are deeper needs thy hand
Hath left unsounded, and the loftiest ends,
Which this mysterious nature lives to serve,
Thine eye surveyed not. To those heights serene,
Whence flow the springs of holy thought and deed,
Whence come the powers that mould immortal man
To his full strength of being, it is strange
That in this clearness of the Christian light
Thy strain has seldom soared. Thy chosen task

Might have been done, yet this, to crown it well,
Not left undone. For nature, though indued
With ministries of good, which may avail
To soothe the spirit, fevered in the strife
And fret of selfish passions, and assuage,
As by the virtue of an anodyne,
That restlessness of heart which earthly cares
Engender, is most impotent to reach
That seat of strife secluded in the depths
Of spirit and of will ; the shadowy world
Wherein loud conscience and the broken law,
In dark array, against the trembling heart
Marshal their terrors, when the trumpet-peal
That rang on cloudy Horeb sounds again,
In that great resurrection of the soul,
When new-born thoughts, like seeds in the spring-mould
Begin to burst their cells, and germinate
With restless life, it searches everywhere
For light, and only finds it when it looks
Where, high o'er drifting clouds, the signal gleam
Of hope is set in heaven. Once the long trance
Is broken, and it feels the deadly weight,
The mystery of sin,—when struggling hard
To rend its bonds asunder, it but twines
The meshes of the net more closely round,—
That strength and power, through which it may attain
To freedom, from a higher sphere must come
Than the low circle of the universe
Horizon'd by the eye. It faints beneath
This crushing load, the consciousness of guilt,
Whereto a haunting terror ever cleaves,
A shadow dark as death. Beholding now
The true end of its being, and the claim
Of an eternal law to all its love
And loyalty, the sense of its revolt
From God, and willing vassalage to sin,
Strikes through it as a pang, and self-condemn'd,
Self-loath'd, it bows its head without a plea,
Falls down before the awful light which hides
Eternal majesty. O wondrous depth

Of grace unsearchable! a trembling hope
 Is, for the lowly mourner, born from out
 The travail of his soul,—a still small voice
 Bids him look up, and see the sacrifice
 Upon the altar, and the pleading priest
 Upon the throne of heaven, and, as he looks,
 Speaks to him of forgiveness, soothes and stills
 The alarm of conscience, and, with gentle strength,
 Goes forth through all the regions of the soul,
 And charms them into holy quietness.

In a spirit of earnestness and sincerity, far deeper than that which prompts the poet to such telling thoughts and picturesque expressions wherewith to beautify his verse, Mr Burns enlarges upon the Evangelical solution of the mystery of the world, and argues its profundity and benignity compared with that afforded by the nature-worship of Wordsworth. Material beauty, he insists, gorgeous as is the woof spun by its mingling colours, “is but the curtain hung before the shrine.” In solemn and majestic words he rebukes that devotion which would seduce us from the personal God to worship a mere abstraction of the mind, clothed in the forms of nature.

Men woke

Some fantasy apparell'd in cloudy pomp
 Of words,—the spirit of the universe,
 Or plastic soul of nature, or the power
 Of intellectual beauty,—and to this,
 Their idol, out of dazzling images
 And glowing thoughts compacted,—as of old
 The desert Apis from the golden rings
 And chains of Israel,—they proclaim a feast
 Of high inauguration, and, with sound
 Of sweetest minstrelsy, they set it up,

And call the world to worship. Let them learn
That nature, though to rarest spirit refined
In their ideal visions, is not God
But from God,—that her glories, at their height,
Can be no avatar of the Divine,
No incarnation of all-ruling mind.
Her ministration and her noblest aim
Are then fulfill'd, when, in her silent signs,
And in the language of her face, we read
That He who form'd her sits upon a throne
Which spurns divided honours. Over all
His works, let His high attributes of power,
Of majesty, of wisdom, and of grace,
Stand eminent,—like glittering spires that rise
High o'er a city's roofs, and lead the thoughts
To heaven.

The poem concludes with a fine eulogium on Cowper.

There was one

Whose name stands high upon his country's roll
Of poets, who, amidst a faithless age,
Stood forward for the honour of his God.
Fresh be his memory to the ends of time,
The pensive bard of Olney ! From the depths
Of an unknown despair he could proclaim
The heavenly hope to which the angels tuned
Their harps at Bethlehem, and, in the woe
Which crush'd his gentle spirit, he could taste
An angel's joy to see each wanderer
Returning to that Father's house, whose gates
He deem'd were closed on him. Within that heart
There dwelt a love of nature, deep, and true,
And fervent as was thine. To him the sight
Of wood, and sky, and mountain minister'd
Pure and perpetual gladness. Yet, through all
Her voices manifold, he only heard
The voice of God ; on all her fair domain,
In radiant signature and imagery,
He saw the golden letters of His name,

The name of love. The common earth to him
Was holy ground, once trodden by the feet
Of One who stooped in human flesh to die,
A Man for man's redemption. In his song
Glow'd inspiration as of altar-fire;
His foot had stood on sacred Olivet,
And on his low-bent head the cleansing dews
Of Jordan had been sprinkled. Nature's voice
To him was not all gladness; he had been
Within the shrine. His ear had caught the sound
Of that mysterious sympathy which breathes
Out of creation's heart to mortal woe;
The undertone in that undying wail
Wherewith the human generations mourn
Beneath the weight of evil. He had heard
The deepest notes which from the seven-fold pipe
Of Pan came to the spiritual ear;
The creature groaning, travailing in pain,
As subject unto change, until the day
Of its redemption from the curse of sin.

The blending of pathetic tenderness with the meek faith and love and child-like trust of a most Christian heart lend an inexpressible charm to many of the more strictly religious poems of Mr Burns. The melody and the meaning of the following lines will be the more deeply felt the longer they are meditated. They appear in this volume without any title, being prefaced merely with the scriptural words, "The footsteps of the flock."

Not always, Lord, in pastures green
The sheep at noon Thou feedest,
Where in the shade they lie
Within Thy watchful eye :
Not always under skies serene
The white fleeced flock Thou leadest.

On rugged ways, with bleeding feet,
They leave their painful traces ;
Through deserts drear they go,
Where wounding briars grow,
And through dark valleys, where they meet
No quiet resting-places.

Not always by the waters still,
Or lonely wells palm-hidden,
Do they find happy rest,
And, in Thy presence blest,
Delight themselves, and drink their fill
Of pleasures unforbidden.

Their track is worn on sorrow's shore,
Where windy storms beat ever,
Their troubled course they keep,
Where deep calls unto deep ;
So going till they hear the roar
Of the dark-flowing river.

But wheresoe'er their steps may be,
So Thou their path be guiding,
Oh be their portion mine !
Show me the secret sign,
That I may trace their way to Thee,
In Thee find rest abiding.

Slowly they gather to the fold
Upon Thy holy mountain,
There, resting round Thy feet,
They dread no storm nor heat,
And slake their thirst where Thou hast rolled
The stone from life's full fountain.

As a companion piece to this may be taken the imaginative and highly-finished Christian lyric entitled "Humility." Two of the stanzas have been already quoted, but no apology is deemed necessary for giving them in their context.

O ! learn that it is only by the lowly
The paths of peace are trod ;
If thou wouldest keep the garments white and holy,
Walk humbly with thy God.

The man with earthly wisdom high uplifted
Is in God's sight a fool ;
But he in heavenly truth most deeply gifted
Sits lowest in Christ's school.

The lowly spirit God hath consecrated
As His abiding rest ;
And angels by some patriarch's tent have waited,
When kings had no such guest.

The dew that never wets the flinty mountain
Falls in the valley free ;
Bright verdure fringes the small desert fountain,
But barren sand the sea.

Not in the stately oak the fragrance dwelleth
Which charms the general wood,
But in the violet low, whose sweetness telleth
Its unseen neighbourhood.

The censer swung by the proud hand of merit
Fumes with a fire abhorred ;
But faith's two mites, dropped covertly, inherit
A blessing from the Lord.

Round lowliness a gentle radiance hovers,
A sweet, unconscious grace ;
Which, even in shrinking, evermore discovers
The brightness on its face.

Where God abides, contentment is and honour,
Such guerdon meekness knows ;
His peace within her, and His smile upon her,
Her saintly way she goes.

Through the straight gate of life she passes stooping,
 With sandals on her feet;
 And pure-eyed graces, hand in hand come trooping,
 Their sister fair to greet.

The angels bend their eyes upon her goings,
 And guard her from annoy;
 Heaven fills her heart with silent overflowings
 Of its perennial joy.

The Saviour loves her, for she wears the vesture
 With which He walked on earth;
 And through her child-like glance, and step, and gesture,
 He knows her heavenly birth.

He now beholds this seal of glory graven
 On all whom He redeems,
 And in his own bright city, crystal-paven,
 On every brow it gleams.

The white-robed saints, the throne-steps singing under,
 Their state all meekly wear;
 Their praise wells up from hidden springs of wonder
 That grace has brought them there.

A large portion of Burns's life was a protracted dying, and in verses like these following, very much more authentically than at the death-bed of Addison, it may be seen how a Christian can die:—

O Thou, whose tender feet have trod
 The thorny path of woe,
 Forbid that I should slight the rod,
 Or faint beneath the blow.

My spirit to its chastening stroke
 I meekly would resign,
 Nor murmur at the heaviest yoke
 That tells me I am Thine.

Give me the spirit of Thy trust,
 To suffer as a son,
 To say, though lying in the dust,
 My Father's will be done !

I know that trial works for ends
 Too high for sense to trace,
 That oft in dark attire He sends
 Some embassy of grace.

May none depart till I have gain'd
 The blessing which it bears,
 And learn, though late, I entertain'd
 An angel unawares.

So shall I bless the hour that sent
 The mercy of the rod,
 And build an altar by the tent
 Where I have met with God.

It will not be out of place to quote here the last verses he ever wrote. They were composed within a few weeks of his death, and when he knew that the end had come.

He hath done all things well !
 Here rest thou weary heart,
 When prone to murmur or rebel,
 Weak, weary, as thou art.

He hath done all things well !
 The bitter and the sweet,
 The light that cheer'd, the shades that fell,
 Are temper'd as is meet.

He hath done all things well !
 Things that seem strange and dim
 Are working ends thou can'st not tell
 In clearest light to Him.

Though in all senses an able man, and in intellectual culture thoroughly abreast of the times, Mr Burns had no sympathy with that speculative boldness in which it has of late been so much the fashion for men of originality to indulge. He accepted with serene, unwavering confidence the whole round of the Christian Revelation, and was a staunch defender of Protestant theology as promulgated by the fathers of the Reformation. But he was familiar with the noblest thoughts of modern literature, and had made them his own by earnest meditation. The idea embodied in the following passage, for example, was not new even when Coleridge said, in reference to the bright and the melancholy aspects of nature, that "ours is the wedding garment, ours the shroud;" but Burns works it out with beauty and effectiveness. The passage occurs in a poem entitled "The Peasant and the Poet."

This visible world is the transparent woof
Whereon the spirit figures to itself
Its fleeting images. The forming mind
Creates and blends the colours, pencils out
The whole device of that mysterious web,
Whose rich entangled cipher represents
All spiritual light and shadow. Hence to some
The curtain of the universe is dyed
With black and purple hues; its sombre folds
Hang close and heavy, loading all with gloom,
Or to some viewless influence move and shake
Like vapours warping on a breeze remote.
In other eyes it quivers as a blue
And lucid veil, investing forms of sense
With softer loveliness, and with a blush

Of tints more beautiful than those of dawn.
But 'tis the mind itself that radiates
This light, or spreads this darkness round the world.
The flakes of crimson cloud that drift at even
Through a clear sky, that undulates with waves
Of amber light,—the shadowy up-coming
Of evening through the element,—the slow
Arising of the moon behind a grove,—
The golden-mailèd legions of the sky,
Led on by that white star that shines so pure
And brilliant in its singleness,—the haze
Of sunlight on the sea, where water blends
With fluent air,—the glooms of summer woods,
The misty blueness of the distant hills,
Are beautiful ; their fascination charms
The sense ; but theirs is beauty of the mind
Not less than of the eye. To him who loves
The thought of the belovèd one, who lights
Both hemispheres of memory and hope,
Where hope makes day, and memory moonlit night,
Is blended with them all, yea, beautifies
All nature with a lustre of its own.
And to the glance of him who lives by faith,
Whose hopes have overspir'd the cloud of sense,
Whose heart still points to heaven, this glorious world
Is as a sacred page illuminate,
And character'd in stainless hues of light
With holy mysteries. Each form of life
Or growth,—each calm, unconscious mood of things,
Fix'd in eternal sameness, deep and still,—
Each changing aspect of creation's face,
Give nourishment to thoughts that live in things
Unseen. Each voice or sound that meets his ear
From hedge or woodland, vale or open field,
Touches some spring of feeling, or reveals
Some parable of truth. Again, perchance,
That Galilean scene of old will live
Upon the eye, when He whose mind could sound
The abysmal clearness of the thoughts of God,

Expounded His divine philosophy
By types familiar to the surface-glance
Of common men. Thus all that he beholds
Becomes the sign of things whose archetypes
Are shrined for ever in the holy mount!

Occasionally, though rarely, Burns reveals in his poetry that knowledge of human nature for which he was in private remarkable, as well as a shrewd, practical philosophy, very unpretentious, but very useful and very deep. Both are present in this description of a selfish grumbler against the dispositions of Providence.

It was his wont to watch
And wear out the slow passage of the months
With sighing, and, untutor'd by the past,
To chide the sunshine for one ray too bright,
And count suspiciously the drops of rain.
Such minds, case-harden'd in their selfishness,
Can take no view of mighty laws at work
Beyond the narrow limits of one grange
Or shire. They never balance private loss
Against the general gain, nor apprehend
The genial mystery of life, and growth,
And fruitfulness, in even passage round
The world. They fret that highest Providence
Stands never at their middle point, ne'er marks
The several seasons off, nor intersects
The elements by lines as clear and sharp
As the degrees upon a weather-glass.

The source of half the false and extravagant notions current in our loose social philosophy is this neglect of *nature's averages*, and the putting of the individual case in place of an induction from a sufficient number of cases. How seldom do we

meet the man who, when the east wind shrivels his own patch of corn, can reflect that the same wind, if he followed it to the tropic of Capricorn, would be found to be an angel of God, tempering the fierce glare of the direct solar beam, and diffusing the softened and salubrious radiance through the atmosphere of the world ! Is it not essentially this same error which leads so many philosophers, when their own eyes happen to be bloodshot, to declare that the whole world is robed in hues of earthquake and eclipse ?

We add another example of his more thoughtful and elevated style. The subject is "Reason and Faith." Of the line which we put into italics, we venture to say that there are few finer in the language. In respect of depth and richness of meaning, it might serve as text for a treatise, and the poetic image of which it consists is intensely expressive, and superlatively beautiful.

How many are the mysteries that lie
Along life's winding ways, and vex the mind
With restless speculation, vague and blind:
In vain doth Reason hold her torch on high,
To trace the round of calm Infinity,
In all its sapphire clearness; in the gloom
She gropes, until she stumbles o'er a tomb;
Earth's roof of cloud to her is all the sky.
But Faith, while in the temple-court she keeps
Her midnight watch, sees up the azure deeps
God's name in starry cipher written fair,—
The vision of His wisdom, power, and love,
Serenely throned these drifting mists above,
Revealed unto the upward gaze of prayer.

Such was Mr Burns's first published volume of poetry. The fact that it attained no great popularity has been already accounted for; yet, after all has been said on that head, the fact will remain a discredit to the religious world, especially to that section of the religious world with whose views those of Burns particularly harmonised. The Evangelical party, specially so called, had possessed few poets of equal promise since the death of Cowper. As usual, the "audience fit though few" was found. Hugh Miller perceived at once that Mr Burns was a man of genius. "We are greatly mistaken," he wrote in the *Witness*, "if Mr Burns be not a genuine poet, skilled, as becomes a scholar and student of classic lore, in giving to his verse the true artistic form, but not the less born to inherit the vision and the faculty which cannot be acquired." He added this fine critical touch, which our examination of Mr Burns's volume has prepared us to appreciate: "In almost every line in some of the pieces we find a distinct bit of picture steeped in poetic feeling." From the day when these poems appeared, Mr Burns obtained that fame which was all he cared for, the grateful recognition, by lovers of sacred minstrelsy, of his right to an honoured place among those sweet singers whose voices have filled the Christian temple.

CHAPTER VII.

MARRIED LIFE—MENTONE—THE END.

IN the autumn of 1859 Mr Burns married Margaret, daughter of Major-General John Macdonald of the Bengal army, and widow of Lieutenant A. Procter of the same service. Mrs Burns was truly a helpmeet for him, congenial in tastes, able to appreciate the peculiarity of his genius and the rare excellence of his character, indefatigably tender in ministering to his wants in time of weakness and suffering, and profoundly sympathising with his whole-hearted devotion to the cause of the Lord. A period of enjoyment—mild and brief, but serene—was now allotted him. The last years of his life were, to use his own fond words, “his happiest and best.” From all those pleasures which depend upon excitement, or involve ceremony and ostentation, he sensitively shrunk, but in the quiet happiness of home his soul delighted. “Few,” writes Mrs Burns, in words which signify much, “even of his most intimate friends knew what he really was at home.” Children were born to him, and he was one who could feel to the utmost the tender brightness of that joy which the presence of

children diffuses through a Christian home. His little ones, of whom there were three, were earnestly welcomed with prayers of gratitude and dedication ; their first smiles, their first steps, their first words, were watched with interest and pleasure ; and he looked forward with loving expectation to the time when he might teach them, and when he might take them by the hand to lead them to the house of God. Though his friendships were few, he had some friends in whom his confidence was complete, and for whom his affection was ardent, and with these he had sweet converse during his married life at Hampstead. When perfectly at his ease with those who understood and loved him, his gift of sociality shone out, and his conversation was charming. A vein of humour, rich, racy, and not without a trace of tartness and satire, would come ever and anon to the surface, and with rare felicity would the shaft of his wit pierce the lion-skin of pretence or pomposity. "His sense of the ludicrous," says Mrs Burns, "was very keen—distressingly so sometimes—for things *would* sometimes present themselves from this point of view, when it would have been more for comfort and expediency otherwise." No one who considers the ironical analysis of character, and the power of humorous description, exhibited in the extracts previously given from his Continental tour, will have difficulty in believing this, or in realising what it means. Held strictly in control, and revealed rarely except when among his chosen

friends, the humour which was a deep characteristic of his genius lent a peculiar and fascinating charm to his conversation.

He was an eager and extensive reader, glancing with rapid eye along the page and seizing the valuable matter. Pencil was ever in hand and note-book at elbow. Books of Eastern travel were special favourites, and it was an often-expressed desire of his heart to visit Palestine, and to stand on the very ground where Jesus trod. Love for the beautiful, amply attested in his poetry, was with him a passion lying at the very roots of his being. It was a memorable sight to observe him, in the awakening of the year, as he gazed with kindling eye and insatiable delight upon the opening leaves and flowers. He liked to have in the room with him some "thing of beauty," which he could watch as it grew, and for the mature loveliness of which he could tenderly wait. It is interesting, as illustrative of the poetic idiosyncrasy, to know that he was intensely affected by the fading away of a beautiful flower. So real was this sorrow to him, that when the bloom began to wane, he would order flowers to be taken away. He could not bear to see them withered. "Just because they were so beautiful," he would say, "I like to think of them as they *were*; don't leave them there fading." He loved mountains, however, and the sea as well as flowers. No aspect of nature, beautiful, grand, or awful, was indifferent to him. In the autumn of 1860, he spent with Mrs Burns four weeks at Hastings. Hour after

hour he would loiter in a quiet little bay beyond the old town, watching the ever-changing waves as they flashed and rolled beneath the high cliffs. The visions and impressions of such hours may be traced in the following sonnet, which will compare with all but the very best sonnets of Wordsworth.

BY THE SEA-SIDE.

Run in, glad waves, scoop'd in transparent shells,
Which catch soft lights of emerald ere they break ;
Let the small ripple fret the sand, and make
The faintest chime of music, such as dwells
Far down within the sea-conch's murmuring cells,
While, hovering o'er the spray, the white birds wet
Their wings, and shouting fishers draw the net
To land, and far sails glitter on the swells.
'Tis bliss to rest, the while these soft blue skies
Breathe over earth their benison of peace,
To feel these lowly forms enchant the eyes,
And grow into the mind by slow degrees,
Till, breathless as a woodland pool, it lies
And sleeps above its sleeping images.

Partly by natural constitution, and partly from the effects of illness, he was of an anxious, nervous, and sensitive temperament. Preaching or any other public appearance was painfully felt by him. Though his hearers, observing his quiet manner and the easy flow of his words, might have no perception of the fact, he never entered the pulpit without agitation. The Saturday night was almost sleepless, and the Sabbath, until his work was done, almost a day of fasting. He said that he could himself hardly understand how it was that "he felt going into the pulpit

each Sabbath well-nigh as if it were the first time." To go to a public meeting, or even to a congregational meeting, was a severely felt ordeal. The most joyful hours of his life were on Sabbath evenings when the work of the day was done. He preferred pastoral work to that of the pulpit, and missed much at Hampstead that house to house ministry to the poor and the sick which he had diligently exercised at Dunblane. Visits to the sick and sorrowing constituted his most congenial employment, and with deep and felicitous sympathy he could speak to the mournful and the weary.

Diffident of his own powers, sternly exacting in finish, and aiming at the highest standard of excellence, he was a laborious and anxious composer. He wrote his poetry and his prose articles during the night, from ten in the evening to four in the morning. When this is said, however, it is not implied that in the actual writing he was slow. He meditated long; he procrastinated to the last moment; but when composing, his thoughts were put upon paper as fast as his pen could trace them. The delicacy of his sensibilities was such that any negotiation of a business kind with publishers was torture to him. In pulpit preparation, he was conscientiously regular, devoting, as far as possible, the Friday and the Saturday to the preparation of his sermons. His Greek Testament was his daily companion. Communion Sabbaths were days of special comfort and holy enjoyment, and at such times he exerted him-

self resolutely to throw off the load of nervous apprehension by which he was commonly depressed. He would sometimes express the wish that he could escape from the consciousness of ministerial responsibility, and sit down at the table as a worshipper and a hearer. None who saw him at communion seasons will forget the sacred elevation and chastened joy which characterised him ; there seemed to be a saintliness and spirituality in his look. His voice, as he officiated at the table, was more tender and solemn than usual, every word coming in simple earnestness and love from the depths of his heart.

In June 1862, he exchanged pulpits for a fortnight with the Rev. J. Macfarlan of Greenock, and before returning from Scotland, took ten days holiday. He visited old friends, made an excursion to Oban, enjoyed the little trip exceedingly, and returned home refreshed in body and spirit. In November of the same year his new Church was opened by Dr Guthrie. Peculiarly susceptible as his poetical temperament made him to influences of place and atmosphere, he experienced great comfort and satisfaction in the new and spacious sanctuary. The love of sunlight was a passion with him ; it was to him, he said, what it was to poor drooping flowers, and he had suffered much from the comparative gloom and cheerlessness of his former place of worship. Early in 1863, to crown all these happy circumstances, a friend who, during his abode in Hampstead and on to the end, was to him more than a brother, provided him with a

delightful residence. Settled with his wife and children in “the Manse,” a name dear to every Scottish minister, with his books around him, his church near, his friends to look in with a word and a smile, he was tranquilly but deeply glad, and it might have been thought that his long years of pilgrimage were to give place to enduring repose. One day, soon after being installed in the new dwelling, he remarked to Mrs Burns, “My work never had a more encouraging aspect—the church built, and this manse ; it seems almost like making a fresh start here.” So, in mercy, he was permitted to hope ; but so it was not to be ; one last melancholy pilgrimage to a foreign land awaited him, and his work was now nearly done.

In April 1863 he attended the meeting of the English Presbyterian Synod at Manchester. He enjoyed the session exceedingly, and returned home so well and bright that it seemed to have done him good both in body and in mind. Shortly after, he proceeded to Edinburgh as a member of the deputation from the English Presbyterian Church to the Free Church. For a considerable number of years his reputation had been making way, and it was now generally felt throughout Scotland that he was an extraordinary man. His address to the Free Assembly was listened to with close attention, and elicited much applause. A brief report of it will still be read with interest by many. In order that one of its allusions may be intelligible to English readers, it is necessary to state that Mr Macleod, Moderator of the Free

Church Assembly in 1863, was minister of Snizort in the Hebrides.

Mr Burns, after stating that he appeared before this venerable Assembly as one of the representatives of the Presbyterian Church in England, said : “ For myself I can testify—and I know that I speak the sentiments of many of my brethren—that our connexion with a Church which claims to be a distinct and independent member of the great Presbyterian commonwealth has in no respect weakened our attachment to the Church which we regard as our spiritual mother, as it certainly has not affected our loyal allegiance to those great principles which the Free Church has been specially called to assert and maintain. Our Church in England owes to the ten years’ conflict the awakening of its religious life. The Disruption marks an epoch, and forms a starting-point in its history, as in your own. Since then it has entered on a career of evangelistic effort which, if beset by peculiar difficulties, and often hampered by straitened resources, has been one of cheering progress, and of most hopeful augury for the future. I think that sometimes sufficient allowance is not made for the difficulties which Presbyterianism in England has to contend with. In Scotland the great mass of the people is leavened with its principles, and breathes its atmosphere, from childhood. It is associated with the heroic struggles of the Covenanters, and hallowed by the blood of martyrs. In England we have to make way against the current, to bear up against the prejudices of some minds, and the ignorance and apathy of many more. Your efforts at self-extension are like constructing a line of railway through a level country, where little more is needed than an accurate survey. Ours is like carrying a

line through a hilly district, where rocks are to be pierced and valleys filled up or bridged over, where there are deep gradients and trying curves. Yet, as I have said, our progress has been encouraging. In the Presbytery of which I am a member we now number twenty-six congregations, no less than seventeen of which have been formed since the Disruption, and of these, twelve within the last ten years. We want, of course, the local compactness which belongs to a Scottish Presbytery, stretching, as our limits do, on the one hand to Brighton, on the other to Exeter, and even to Alderney and Guernsey, deep in the Channel—though speaking of compactness, I may observe, that from the farthest verge of our ecclesiastical territories in the Channel Islands there may be dimly descried a congregation,

‘Placed far amid the melancholy main,’

which for some mysterious reason claims to be connected with the Presbytery of Edinburgh. There has been for some years past a growing desire with us that the substantial agreement and cordial understanding that exists between the two Churches should assume a more practical form—that it should be exhibited, not in words only, but in deeds—by some actual co-operation in the great work to which our Lord and Master has called us. One of the most gratifying incidents at the recent meeting of our Synod in Manchester was the announcement, in the report of our Home Mission, of the formation of a Presbyterian congregation at Swansea, with every prospect of stability and growth, and that mainly owes its success to the labours of ministers of the Free Church. I may be excused for specially mentioning the name of Dr Julius

Wood of Dumfries, who was led in the providence of God to give the infant charge the benefit of his faithful ministrations and fostering care, and who has thereby placed our Church under deep obligations. Now, this case of Swansea very clearly points out the way in which, as a Church, you could render us most valuable assistance in the work in which our Home Mission is engaged. In almost all the large towns of England, centres of commercial activity and influence, there are numbers of Presbyterians who have not forgotten the Church of their fathers, though it is scarcely wonderful they should think it has forgotten them. What has been done at Swansea might easily be done in twenty other places not less important. Our true policy of Church extension is to plant ourselves in such localities, and make them a basis of operation for the surrounding districts. We are unable, from the smallness of our numbers, to avail ourselves of these openings, and we look for help to you. It is not money we come to ask—though I have no right to say it would be refused—and, indeed, the General Assembly of the Irish Church made a very handsome collection for us last year—an example worthy of imitation—but men. Sure I am, that if, during the coming year, your Home Mission Committee would place at the service of ours ten or twelve men, such as one could easily mention—men who have had experience in such work in Scotland, and whose names would command respect to their message, good incalculable would be the result. Your countrymen in England have a claim, and our Church has a special claim. While I hold it a right thing to present Presbyterianism to the English people as indigenous, and not exotic—to make it strike a vigorous and independent root in English soil, such as it

had 200 years ago—there is no doubt that the name of the Free Church has a weight and a significance which does not as yet belong to the name of English Presbyterianism.” After referring to English ecclesiastical controversies, and Canon Stanley’s letter advocating the abrogation of clerical subscription, Mr Burns concluded: “This is enough to show that great changes are imminent. These are the sounds of preparation and foreshadowing of a conflict, the immediate results of which it is impossible to forecast. But believing as I do that our own simple form of worship and government is most in accordance with the Word of God, that under it we have the best securities for purity of doctrine, and effectiveness of grave and temperate discipline—that in it lie the elements of the solution of many difficulties that appear at present to men of thoughtful and pious minds in the Church of England and out of it—I feel persuaded that in the coming conflict we Presbyterians in England have a solemn and critical part to take, and that, in faithfully avowing and fearlessly carrying out our principles, we shall occupy a position of signal advantage, and may expect them to tell more powerfully on the English mind than they have ever yet done. It is my firm faith that God has been holding us in reserve, and that the special work appointed to us in England begins now to open out more distinctly. In that work you can be, and will be, a valuable auxiliary. It is not ours—it is not yours—it is God’s; and with you we are bound to have regard to it by the best interests of our fellow-men, the cause of evangelical Christianity, and the welfare of our beloved land. You can send us men to tell the great things that God has done in your own borders; and, by assisting us with our evangelistic work, quicken

and animate our exertions, enable us at once to extend and concentrate our efforts, and practically exhibit the union of heart and mind, of belief and confession, which links us together by a sacred and enduring bond. Out of your abundance, and the riches of your liberality, there might easily be made a contribution to our poverty. If, sir, your native isle furnished in little more than a single generation no fewer than 10,000 gallant Highlanders, the full strength of two imperial legions, to fight the battles of their country, I cannot doubt that this Church, renowned in Christendom for its chivalrous zeal and deeds of heroic daring and self-sacrifice, will supply a company of volunteers—a contingent to reinforce the small, struggling, hard-pressed battalion, and inspire us with one heart and mind in fighting the battles of the Lord. We can rejoice in your prosperity as our own—we know that you will rejoice in ours as yours. For the brethren and companions' sake, we can say, Peace be within you ; and I feel that you will not withhold from our brotherly greeting the response and the promise, ‘Because of the peace of the Lord our God, I will seek thy good alway.’”

He was much pressed to preach in Dr Candlish's pulpit on this occasion, but his strength had been already overtired, and he was compelled to decline. He returned from Edinburgh with a severe cold, and, says Mrs Burns, “his hoarse voice sent a chill through me the first word he uttered on reaching home.” “This cold,” she adds, “he never thoroughly shook off.”

Not many months had passed after the opening of

the new church, when a notable subsidence of strength alarmed his friends. He could not go up the High Street of Hampstead without frequent pauses to recover strength ; and although in the absence of pain he did not feel alarm, when he consulted his kind physicians, Dr Brown and Dr A. P. Stewart, they at once detected the revival of active disease in the chest, and as the best means of arresting it ordered their patient to proceed at once to Mentone.

The following letter to Mr Bell shows how little anxiety he himself felt, and how hopefully he started on his journey.

“ THE MANSE, HAMPSTEAD,
December 31, 1863.

“ MY DEAR FRIEND,—I daresay the tidings of our intended departure in a few days for a milder climate took you somewhat by surprise. It came upon myself, as a right and fitting step to be taken, rather unexpectedly ; for though I have not been feeling very vigorous these few months past, I have been preaching regularly, and going on with my work much as usual. However, it has been deemed advisable that I should not risk the next few months in our keen Hampstead air, and in the beginning of the week we shall set our faces southward to sunny Italian skies. It is in many ways a painful trial, this forced retreat just now from active labour, with our new church so recently opened, and so many things to press on one’s mind ; to leave, too, the manse which had just become one’s pleasant home. As before, I feel that God is

leading me by a way I would not have chosen for myself, and I go forth trusting that His presence will go with me and make me to feel that it has been the right way in the end.

“ We hope to leave London on Tuesday next, and mean to travel by easy stages on account of the children. Our route will be by Boulogne, Paris, Lyons, and Marseilles; thence to Nice, from which Mentone, our destination, is twenty-five miles distant on the road to Genoa. We have glowing accounts of the mildness of the climate, and the beauty of the place, which nestles in orange and lemon groves, in a bright blue bay of the Mediterranean. There are a good many English visitors there this winter, some of them of course invalids, and I hope there may be opportunities of usefulness, though my Sabbaths will be silent for a time. My sister has been with us this last week, and we have been often speaking of you all.”

This time, however, Mentone did not fulfil its promises. At his arrival in January 1864, instead of a mild climate, Mr Burns found weather as severe as he had left in England, and though the “ orange and lemon groves ” were there, they were bending under such a snow-fall as had not been known for many years. Instead of being beneficial, the first effect of the change was decidedly injurious, and the spring was considerably advanced before he regained the ground which he had lost at his first arrival. “ All His saints are in His hand,” and the seasons and the

elements are under the same control ; and although at first that bitter weather seemed a strange answer to the prayers of many friends, it was after all the gracious messenger in a grim disguise, and brought one of God's dear children the sooner home. He did not mourn nor murmur, and in playful mood he threw off the following lines on "The Snowflake and the Citron" for the amusement of a little friend at Heathlands, whose printing-press soon supplied a copy to most of his London acquaintances :

A snowflake came fluttering down through the air
Where a citron grew in a garden fair,
"I am weary of flying," it said to the tree,
"I should like to rest for a while on thee!"

Said the citron-tree, "It is many a year,
That I have been growing and flourishing here,
But I have ne'er seen a creature like thee ;
Now tell me first what thy name may be !

"The little bird comes to my topmost spray,
And sings its song all the sweet spring day ;
The bee and the butterfly well I know,
Lightly they come and lightly they go.

"They nestle about in my fragrant flowers,
And they fly away to their woodland bowers,
They never hurt me in blossom or stem—
Art thou an innocent creature like them ?"

"Oh never fear !" said the little snowflake ;
"The smallest bird that sings in the brake,
The gauze-wing'd bee or the butterfly,
Is not such a gentle creature as I !

"I am but a rain-drop out at play
In my soft white mantle this winter day,
It is crystal-clasp'd—it is light and warm—
How could a rain-drop do thee harm ?"

“ Well then ! ” said the citron-tree with a smile,
“ You are welcome to stay and rest awhile ! ”
And the little snowflake chose out on the tree
For his perch the greenest leaf he could see.

Then another came, and another came,
And their request was always the same,
Till the citron branches one and all
Were white with the snowflakes’ noiseless fall.

And soon there struck to its heart a chill
Never felt before,—a foreboding of ill,—
And soon with the weight of the falling flakes,
Its loveliest branch bends down and breaks.

And its deep roots shiver’d under the ground,
And its golden fruits dropped off all round,
And so the snowflake, so small to see,
Was the death of the beautiful citron-tree.

There are lines here which recall Shelley’s “ Sensitive Plant,” universally recognised as one of the master-pieces of that great poet. The melancholy conclusion—the death in which beauty and friendship and love all end—has a deep pathos in connexion with the circumstances under which the poem was written.

On the 22d of February, dating from 7 Rue Saint Michael, Mentone, he writes to Mr Bell :—

“ The first three weeks after our arrival, whether from the effects of a severe cold caught on the journey, or the collapse ensuing from absolute cessation of work, I was in a state of great prostration, much weaker than when I left. This is passing off, but slowly ; and as the weather gets milder and more

settled, I hope the improvement will be more decided.

“ You may have heard of the proposal of my congregation to give me a colleague. The arrangement is based on terms most considerate and liberal to myself; and very much from the feeling that has been impressed on me since coming here, that I cannot look for a very speedy return to active labour, I have seen it my duty to acquiesce. A cordial and unanimous call will be given to Mr Matheson of Forgue, and I hope he will accept it. He has the qualities in which I am deficient, and will find a sufficient sphere of usefulness at Hampstead.”*

No arrangement could be wiser or kinder. To a new and not very numerous congregation it was a considerable effort to sustain two ministers; but with a noble liberality and cheerfulness that effort was made, and whilst Mr Burns was enabled to prolong his continental sojourn without anxiety, not only did the Rev. John Matheson find an ample and

* It was by a providence not a little remarkable that Mr Matheson, who had never met Mr Burns, was summoned to the south of France this very spring, to receive at Marseilles a widowed sister-in-law from China, and to see her settled at Cannes. Mr Matheson very kindly took advantage of the opportunity of being so comparatively near to make a brief visit to Mentone, that he might bring back tidings of the dear invalid Pastor. It was a source of deep satisfaction to Mr Burns that he had been allowed the pleasure of making the personal acquaintance of him on whom the mind of the congregation became afterwards fixed as his colleague and successor at Hampstead, and the interview was greatly enjoyed by both

extending sphere of usefulness at Hampstead, but in his accession the Presbytery of London obtained a fellow-labourer, unwearying and most successful in the work of Church extension in London and around it.

In the end of May, Mr Burns and his family exchanged Mentone for Switzerland. From Clarens, on the 22d of June, he addressed a pastoral letter to his Hampstead flock. It is full of the most tender solicitude for their spiritual welfare, and is pervaded with the fervent piety of one living near God, and much in prayer. "It has been a great joy to me," he says, "to hear from time to time that the attendance at the weekly prayer meeting has been so well kept up. There can be no surer index of spiritual life and prosperity, no better sign that God has a blessing in reserve. Often at the seasons when I knew you were thus assembled, have I felt myself inwardly cheered and strengthened by the thought that I was not forgotten in your prayers, and one could not but rejoice in so sensibly realising the fellowship of believing and loving hearts, the communion of saints. And let me say very seriously, as a truth that has been deeply borne in upon my soul, that never does a minister need thus to be remembered more, than when the hand of God has been laid on him to arrest him in his course of service, and to seal his lips before his time. Such a visitation shows him many things from another point of view. Affliction, like death, casts over the soul the shadow

of the coming eternity, and reveals so many sins and imperfections, such iniquity in holy things, that one can only abase one's-self before the Searcher of hearts, and cry, God be merciful to me a sinner. Sometimes I think that if ever permitted again to preach the word of grace and truth amongst you, it would be with a heavier sense of responsibility, and of the sacred and awful trust of dealing with immortal souls. Meanwhile, I desire to submit myself in this and all other events of life to the Master's will, desiring that Christ may be magnified in me, whether by service or suffering, whether by working or waiting, whether by life or death."

He then refers in hopeful terms to the symptoms of improvement which at that time revealed themselves in his health. "Here," he proceeds, "amid the scenes of grandeur and loveliness that surround me, girt round by the munitions of Alpine rocks, and gazing on the broad blue lake,—which, mirroring the eternal hills in its glassy sheet, reminds one of Gennesaret, the Saviour's lake,—with time given to commune with one's own heart and with God, it would be my desire to cultivate more of the habit of fellowship with Him whose power and majesty are so wondrously stamped on all that I behold,—Him who in His word has still more wondrously revealed Himself, as the Father of mercies and the God of all grace, making these earthly things types of unseen realities, things eternal in the heavens. How blessed to know Him in Christ, reconciled and reconciling.

and to say, ‘Thy righteousness is like the great mountains, thy judgments are a mighty deep, How excellent is thy loving-kindness, O God !’ To be able to say, ‘The mountains shall depart and the hills be removed ; but His kindness shall not depart from me, neither shall the covenant of His peace be removed.’

“ The Lord grant to us all grace so to follow on to know Him, giving diligence to make our calling and election sure, that we may daily grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. May the joy of the Lord be our strength now, and His glory hereafter our portion and exceeding great reward !”

In a letter dated Clarens, Vaud, July 4, 1864, he writes to Mrs Bell :—

“ I am thankful to say that, since coming to Switzerland, my health has decidedly improved. The style of living, and the fresh mountain air, have begun to tell favourably on the system, though as yet I am far from having any superfluous vigour. This winter has given me a ruder shock than I ever had before, and often, in looking back on the first dreary weeks at Mentone, I feel that if I had been alone, I could scarcely have dragged through, and bless God for having given me the gentle nurse and comforter who is beside me.

“ We were only three days at Geneva, and came on first to Montreux, a place about a mile from this ; but we found a want of shade about it, and it was

so steep and hilly that, after a week's trial, we removed to Clarens, where we have abundance of trees and level walks, and the most beautiful views you can imagine. Greatly does the sight of Nature's magnificence soothe and elevate my spirit; one never tires of gazing on these spotless snows and crystal waters. We are two miles from Chillon, a view of which I enclose. The snowy ridge you see in the distance is the Dent du Midi, which we have constantly in sight. We live in one of the *pensions*, or boarding-houses, that abound in these parts, and are very comfortable. We have more than forty people in the house, most of them English, and a society agreeable enough on the whole. The children are delighted with the attention paid to them, and will think domestic life very slow after all this excitement. To avoid the summer heat we must go higher up than this, and in the end of the week we ascend to Les Avants, a place in the mountains above Clarens, where we shall remain for a month at least, possibly two, if it suits us."

The last letter which his faithful correspondents in Glasgow received from him was written from Vevay, October 8, 1864.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—I wrote to Mrs Bell from Clarens in the first week of July. The next two months we spent at a mountain *châlet*, 'Les Avants,' in the Vaudois Alps. A primitive kind of life it was, and we greatly enjoyed it. In the beginning of September we came down to Vevay, a place as you know

between Lausanne and Chillon, beautifully situated on the lake, and embosomed in vineyards. Our stay here, however, has been overshadowed by the sickness of our children. They have been suffering all the time from hooping-cough, and this week I have had an attack of a peculiar malady, St Anthony's fire, not a dangerous, but a very painful visitation. We leave (*D.V.*) on Monday for Geneva and Lyons, and hope to reach Mentone by the end of the week. I have been on the whole benefited by our residence in Switzerland, and I hope to return southwards under more favourable circumstances than before.

“One great drawback at Mentone is the want of books, literary journals, &c. Would you go shares in the *Athenæum* with me for six months, or do you know any one that would? I mean I would gladly pay half the subscription and the postage. I would not mind its being a week old, if it reached me regularly. Also, I wish I could get a second-hand copy of the London *Examiner*, a paper I used to see on the same terms.

“For the last three months I have been able to hold a religious meeting every Sabbath. It has been a very quiet, simple affair; but I cannot tell you what a privilege and pleasure I have felt it not to be utterly useless, or cast aside as a vessel wherein is no pleasure.”

Thus he wrote from Vevay on the eighth of October; —“shares with me in the *Athenæum* for six months.” So far, he thought, he could still look with some

confidence into the future. But he was mistaken. The “shadow feared of man,” which he had so long seen waiting for him by the wayside, was nearer than he thought. In less than two months after the day when he wrote to Mr Bell, he had gone to render his account to that Master whom, to use his own simple and artless words, he had felt it “a privilege and pleasure” to serve.

The journey from Vevay to Mentone was accomplished with encouraging ease. His spirits rose, and he became hopeful and cheerful. Relieved from the bustle and confusion of the *pension* in which he had lived at Vevay, with his family restored to health around him, and in a house which he could feel to be a home, he was once more happy. But these appearances proved deceitful. The faint glow of strength and animation which he experienced was but that fleeting effect of change and mild excitement by which the insidious disease that had now pushed its approaches almost to the citadel of his life so often simulates the return of health. The reaction came, his energies ebbed rapidly away, and as the last leaves fell from the branch at the touch of the November wind, it became evident that he was dying.

He went up-stairs for the last time on Friday night, November 18, and was terribly exhausted by the effort. All that day he had been feeling very weak and depressed, and friends who called to see him in the afternoon were much struck by the weary expression of his countenance. He asked Mr

Morgan, the English clergyman, to pray with him. After, with much difficulty, getting him into bed, he folded his hands like a little child, and bowing his head he said, "I must pray as my Master prayed, three times using the same words, Father, not my will but Thine be done," repeating the words twice again.

A few days later, when he had risen about two o'clock, it was remarked that he seemed rather stronger. He replied, "Well, I do think I am not so tired to-day. What a delightful thing a glorified body will be!—this *vile* body of death, I have never cared much for it." That same night severe attacks of breathlessness came on, and next morning the doctor could not but tell him that all the symptoms were unfavourable, and his case becoming very critical. All that was said was received with a cheerful quietness that showed he was not unprepared to hear the worst. Mrs Burns says, "On first going up after the doctor had gone, I could not help my tears. I asked him if it distressed him too much; 'Oh, not now,' he said so tenderly. After a little we were able to talk quietly of the glorious change that now seemed so near for him. He was very bright, and talked a great deal of different things. He asked me to say 'some of the hymns you used to say to me long ago.' I repeated, 'Lord, it belongs not to my care,' the one he asked for first, and which was always a great favourite. Then, 'Jesus, thy blood and righteousness ;' 'There is a fountain filled with blood ;' 'Beloved, it is well.' In most of them he

joined, and then asked for 'How sweet the name of Jesus sounds,' adding, 'I have been so drawn to that hymn this summer, and you remember it was the last we sang at our meetings, and I raised the tune myself. You will think of me sometimes when you hear that hymn.' He could not speak of leaving us without tears then. It pained him to think of his little ones growing up without 'knowing their papa, who loved them so fondly.' He spoke of their going home and entering his study, and recognising all the old things, 'and I'll not be there.' He thought of the garden of which he had been so fond, 'and the dear little tree under which we all sat.' And then we spoke again of the brightness and the glory of that land above.

"Dreading unconsciousness very much, he asked me to pray that his mind might be clear to the last, and that he might be spared pain and a long conflict. He shrank from pain and death. 'I can never expect to have what is called a triumphant death-bed. I am not of a hopeful nature, and my religious experience has never been what one would call joyous. I shall be thankful just to creep into heaven, into the lowest corner, and look upon *His blessed face!* Oh what a Saviour He is, I wonder how I can love Him so little.'

"When lying here, I feel, what I have often felt when visiting those as low as I am now, that one must just come back to the simple truth: "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." And oh,

He will not cast me out. I come to him as a poor sinner with nothing of my own.'

"I said—

'Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness
My beauty are, my glorious dress.'

"'Yes,' he said, 'that's all my hope. Death ought not to be a strange thought to me, I have been so long ill; but it is a little painful still to think of leaving you, Maggie, and our sweet wee bairnies, and my people, and my work, and some friends who might have expected me to see them home first; but it is God's will, and it is all well. I am perfectly satisfied that everything has been done that could have been done, and far more than I ever could have expected; but it has not been the Lord's will to restore me. He has done with me for work now.'

"'Till a week ago, I always hoped to go back to Hampstead to see all the dear faces again. I should like to have had a few weeks among them, just to have said farewell.'

"'I feel I have not made use of the talents God has given me as I might have done, and ought to have done. Some of my friends may think it has been from mere indolence. But you know it has not been that. I never can satisfy myself in writing. This at first sight looks like humility; but it is pride, setting myself apart from every one else. But God will accept my unworthy services, and forgive my shortcomings.'

A consultation of physicians having been held, some hope was held out that he might yet be restored to his invalid state, and go on for some time. He said to them very quietly and cheerfully, "It is right to use all means, and leave the result in higher hands. I hope I have tried to live knowing that this hour must come. All is done for me, I feel, that can be, and a Christian man can desire nothing more but to leave the result quietly with God."

A telegram had been despatched to London that morning. All day he had had occasional attacks of breathlessness, which were very distressing. One of these came on at half-past seven in the evening, and seemed suddenly to pass off. He was reminded that they would be just engaging in prayer at Hampstead at the weekly prayer-meeting, where they would have heard of the telegram. He looked up and said earnestly, "And God has answered their prayer; while they were yet speaking He has heard."

Next day, Thursday, November 24, he asked for his Greek Testament as usual, and read it for the last time. He spoke little, feeling weaker, but was full of peace and calm, and so like himself in every word and look. A letter from Hampstead having come, was read to him, and he was greatly pleased to hear of the special prayer-meeting of the office-bearers on his behalf. His wife said, "And their prayer is answered. You *are* able to roll every burden on the Lord." "Oh yes," he said. "And you have perfect peace." "No," he said slowly; "you must not say

perfect peace ; I have a great shrinking from suffering and death." "But it is not death," she said, "but just passing into glory, and you don't go alone : 'When I pass through the valley and shadow of death I will fear no evil ; for Thou art with me : Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me.'"
"Yes," he said ; "but there is something very mysterious in the departure of the spirit from the body, and we don't know exactly in what state the spirit is, whether it has any sympathy with the body until they are reunited. But we must not speculate on these things, on which we have so little to guide us. Sufficient to know that 'Absent from the body is present with the Lord.' What am I that I should be taken up yonder ? What an assemblage ! most of the patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs, saints, and little children. Paul is there. I shall see Paul. How often I have preached about him ! now I shall see him. How he loved Jesus ! And Peter is there. And I shall see Jesus, blessed Jesus."
He added with great energy, "We are the majority up yonder. You are the poor ones who have to go back and struggle on in the world."

He spoke this day with much affection of some of his chief friends at Hampstead. "Dear Heathlands, a happy home." "Dear Kenwood, where I used to write my sermons, and we used to walk." He expressed deep sympathy with Mr and Mrs Groom on the death of their little girl. When she was ill he used to say, "Polly and I are going home together." Now he said, "Dear, sweet Polly, there is no Polly

here now ; she has outrun me, and reached the sepulchre first, and seen the risen Saviour."

Next day, Friday, November 25, he was much weaker ; the expectoration had sensibly decreased, and he appeared to sink so rapidly, that it was feared he could not survive till the friend expected from London should arrive. In the course of the forenoon he was asked, " May I tell them it is perfect peace now ? " " Oh yes, *perfect* peace," he said slowly, and with emphasis. " All fear is taken away. I feel God has weaned me now. You know how I have loved you, and my children, and my people, and my work, but I am willing to leave you all now and go to Jesus. I should just like to shut my eyes and fall asleep on Jesus' bosom : blessed Jesus ! blessed Jesus ! " " My Lord is so good to me ;" " Mercy abounds, I have all I want," were frequent expressions. " Christ hath abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel," was a text often repeated. " I wish my dear colleague and kinsman, John Matheson, to preach my funeral sermon from these words, ' I am the resurrection, and the life : he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live : and whosoever liveth, and believeth in me, shall never die. Believest thou this ? ' Tell him I feel that for a long time the Lord has been gradually weaning me from the world, and I hope I may say I die as a Christian man, a poor sinner resting on Jesus, on the precious truth that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. I have felt often how unworthy I was ever

to be put into the ministry, to serve at the altar of God, and how unworthy have been my services. It has always been my desire to comfort. I liked to try and comfort. People may have thought me too smooth, not rousing enough, but I have liked so to comfort, having so often felt the need of comfort myself. I thank God that He has given me some pleasant associations with my work as a minister, in having permitted me to comfort some when they were weary. I want to add my humble testimony from the bottom of my heart that He is a faithful Master, and will not forsake His own in the dying hour. I have been dying for twenty years, now I am going to live. Christ hath abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel."

He took tender leave of the children this day, one by one, and did not see them again. He also took leave of their faithful nurse Emma, very affectionately. He asked her for all her family, told her how much he felt the faithful service she had rendered them, and expressed the wish that she would remain with them. He commended her to God, and prayed for His blessing on her.

On the night of Friday the 25th November he was cheered by the kindness of the Rev. A. Burn Murdoch of the Free Church at Nice, who came over to see him, and sat with him till the evening of the next day. Mr Burn Murdoch does not think he ever saw so sweet a death-bed, and he recorded some of his

impressions at the time in a letter which was published in the Free Church Missionary Record.

“ It was on the evening of Friday, the 25th November,” writes Mr Murdoch, “ that I heard he was supposed to be dying, and I was able to be with him about midnight. He sat supported by pillows, lovingly tended by his sorrowing wife, and by Mrs Morgan, the kind wife of the English clergyman, a succourer of many, whom, along with Madame Delapierre, the wife of the French pastor, I cannot deny myself the pleasure of mentioning as ever ready to show Christian kindness to poor sufferers at Mentone.

“ Quite unable to move in bed, he yet wished to have his position changed from time to time; an indescribable weariness rather than pain being that which oppressed him.

“ ‘ I am a poor creature,’ he said. ‘ I shrink from physical suffering, and I have had little, very little.’

“ ‘ He knoweth our frame,’ I said. ‘ He remembereth that we are dust.’

“ ‘ He has done so with me,’ he rejoined.

“ I told him that I had just heard that many promising young men in Scotland were entering on theological study, and said, ‘ That the Lord would supply our places.’

“ He said, ‘ It will go on. These last few years I have loved my wife, I have loved my children, I have loved my friends, I have loved my work, as much as any man; but I am enabled to leave them all, and have no wish but to be at rest in the arms

of my Lord. I am weary, weary. Perhaps the weakness of the body gives me this desire for rest.'

"At another time he said, 'Pray for me, my brother. I should like you to ask for me a gentle dismissal, and a clear mind to enter eternity with, that I may testify to the last to the Lord's faithfulness. Or if, through weakness of the body, this be not possible, that I may never let go hold of Christ. And I desire now to testify beforehand to the Lord's wonderful goodness to me at all times. He has been ever faithful; and especially during the last few days His mercies have been more than I should have imagined beforehand.'

"Again he said, 'When it comes to this, there's nothing for it but that word, "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." Men may sit in their studies and write against the Bible, and point their pens against this and that in the Bible: but I feel now what I have often thought in speaking to others as low as I myself am now, that this is the only rock, "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."

"The sky was wild and gray, the sea restless; and with a dull monotonous wash the surf broke upon the shingle just below the windows of the room where the poor sufferer, unable to sleep or to be still, was wearing out the night. The poetic fire gleamed forth to the last. He drew my attention to the noise of the sea, and said, 'A weary sound—it cannot rest.

There is a point of sympathy between me and it just now.'

"I said, 'There shall be no more sea. There remaineth a rest.'

"'Sabbatismos!' he replied, pronouncing the word very slowly and with great feeling.

"His bodily distress was very great, and it was in a scarcely audible voice, and with self-denying effort that from time to time he gave utterance to such sentiments as those I have here noted down. Serenity was the characterising feature of his dying hours. But when, on Saturday afternoon I prayed, and kissed him, and said, 'Adieu!—To God!' his parting look was radiant with joy."

A few hours later, the arrival from London of one of the elders of Mr Burns's congregation at Hampstead, Mr Hugh M. Matheson, was a great joy to the dying man, and a most seasonable solace to the weary watchers by his side. He survived Mr Matheson's arrival just four and twenty hours, and although unable during any part of that time to lay down his head, but needing to be propped up in the bed with pillows, and to be constantly aided for the relief of his sufferings, his countenance was lighted up with a radiance it had not known for years, and he never uttered an impatient word, or wearied of testifying to the faithfulness of the Lord whom he loved. At eleven o'clock on the night of Sabbath the 27th November 1864, he gently breathed his last.

His remains were brought to England, and were

deposited in the cemetery at Highgate, a large concourse of mourners attending the service, which was held in Trinity Presbyterian Church, Hampstead, and following the bier to its final resting-place.

Mr H. M. Matheson, addressing the Presbytery of London, at its first subsequent meeting, said:—"I have thought that in connexion with the affecting announcement now made, you may justly expect from me some little notice of the last hours of my beloved pastor and friend. Not that I feel able in any sense to do justice to the theme, but because in the good providence of God, I was permitted to minister at his dying bed, and to hear from his lips the most precious testimony to the faithfulness of the Lord whom he loved. I feel sensible indeed of a deep regret that the privilege I enjoyed was not given to some one of you who could have turned it to so much better account, and given to mourning friends a more vivid description of a scene which can never pass from my memory, and which, the more I think of it, grows upon me as one of remarkable sweetness, serenity, and trust. There was nothing like ecstasy, but a chastened gravity, which you will probably think with me more in harmony with the circumstances. And yet the countenance was lighted up as it had never been since the trying day of his separation from the people and the work he had loved so well.

"On the day of my expected arrival, it had been feared he could not survive till evening, but I found

him slightly stronger, supported all round by pillows, and his devoted wife, most kindly assisted by Mrs Morgan, wife of the Church of England clergyman of the place, who as well as her husband were truly friends in need, and thought nothing of spending themselves in this work of true charity. Much kindness and sympathy was also shown by M. Delapierre, of the French Evangelical Church, and by his wife, the daughter of Napoleon Roussel.

“I cannot describe to you the joy which beamed from his face as I entered the room. He grasped my hand, and when able to speak he said, ‘I have been greatly weaned the last few days from all kinds of longings, but if there was any one on earth whom I much wished to see once more it was you, and now God has enabled me to shake you by the hand.’ After some words of grateful affection, he said, ‘I am kept in great peace, far beyond what I expected. I used to fear there would be sufferings, but I have really very little pain.’ He then testified to the comfort his wife had ever been to him, the support he had derived from knowing he had been so constantly remembered by his people, and the unspeakable satisfaction it gave him to feel that Mr Matheson occupied his place and had charge of his people. Returning to his bedside at four in the morning, I never again left him till the weary struggle was over, and the ransomed spirit returned unto God who gave it and who had sanctified it. He continued in great weakness during the whole of that day, Sunday, the

27th November, weakness which, towards the last, became very, very painful ; but all through was so sweetly patient ; and gave frequent expression in brief words of Scripture to the leading thoughts of his heart, responding also with quick intelligence to the last, to any such that were brought by others to his mind.

“ ‘I feel,’ he said, ‘I am greatly weaned from looking at second causes. It has not been His will to give success to the means rightly used. Everything has been done for me that could have been done. It is the Lord, He hath both spoken unto me and Himself hath done it. I have been graciously dealt with, indeed my cup runneth over. I have been an unprofitable servant, and though my ministry has been in some measure graciously approved, I rely entirely and simply, not on anything I have done for Him, but on what He has done for me. Oh Lord, my flesh and my heart faileth, but thou art the strength of my heart and my portion for ever. What a blessed word that *for ever* is, as compared with this wee bit of time.’ He asked me to read to him the 71st Psalm, with ‘Cast me not off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength faileth,’ and repeated some of the words with emphasis. I afterwards read the 20th Psalm, and when it was over, he said, ‘How nice it is to hear these grand old words —nothing like that Rock.’

“ He asked me to sing to him, and I was able to get through two verses of ‘Rest for the Weary,’ and the

whole of 'Rock of Ages,' and his wife repeated 'How sweet the name of Jesus sounds,' a hymn of which he was very fond. 'We used to sing them,' he said, when in Switzerland.'

"He spoke of his people with much tenderness; had never known how deep was the attachment till he was called to leave them. Till a week before his death he had cherished the hope of returning to Hampstead, 'that he might see all the dear faces again.' He had sought to make his ministry a means of comfort. He had felt so much need of comfort himself, that he loved best those subjects which could lead him to comfort his people. His wife says that in Switzerland his addresses on Sunday afternoons, which were a great delight to himself, and much appreciated, were almost entirely of this character, the sympathy of Jesus being dwelt upon with special tenderness.

"It now only remains for me to say that he sent messages of loving farewell to his Session, his people, his Sabbath-school, the Reformatory girls, and those who conduct that most excellent institution, in which he took so warm an interest, and that among those whom he remembered with his latest breath were the dear members of this Presbytery. 'Give my most affectionate farewell to the brethren of the Presbytery, every one of them, but especially James Hamilton.'"

Sensitive, retiring, modest almost to a fault, Mr Burns would probably without hesitation have classed

himself among those whose names are “writ in water ;” not only, however, will the memory of his Christian walk, and the serene depth and fervour of his piety, be a priceless treasure to all who knew him well, but it may be confidently predicted that the melodious words in which he gave expression to the sentiments and the experience of the Christian life will be cherished in the Church for centuries. That his powers never had full sweep and scope,—that, in particular, they were never developed in their whole energy on the intellectual side,—will not be questioned. There are glimpses in his poetry,—there are glimpses perhaps still more striking and suggestive in the extracts given from his prose tour,—of high intellectual capacity. We are always sensible, as we read what he has written, of a reserve of force. His taste, naturally exquisite, was rendered still more delicately sensitive by illness, and in its almost morbid refinement exercised a controlling, one might venture to say a chilling, influence upon his genius. To have risen into a strain of eloquent sublimity would have required, on his part, not the application to his mind of the spur, but the mere loosing of the rein. In his dread of glare, he shrank from colour. How easy it was for him to soar into the altitudes of eloquence and poetry—the mere expansion of his breast, and opening of his wings bearing him, like the lark, aloft into the blue heavens,—is evident from such occasional passages as this on the manifestation of the love of God, which occurs in

a sermon published by him in the *Family Treasury* in 1862. "In this," he wrote, "is manifested the love of God, that in His care for everything He has made, there is nothing so high as to be above it, so lowly as to be beneath it. He who keeps alive the unquenchable light of a star visible to a hemisphere, kindles the small taper of the glow-worm that gleams in the twilight on the mossy bank. He who piles up and loosens the Alpine avalanche shapes the crystals of each falling snowflake. He who guides and bridles the storm wave that breaks in thunder upon the reef, preserves each invisible coral insect that builds its lime cell beneath the booming surf. He who sees from His glorious high throne the seraph veiling his face with his wings, takes note of the sparrow falling to the ground. He has blazoned His name on the sun's shield of golden fire in heaven. He has stamped His image and superscription on the fossils of the mountain rock and the ocean cliff; those medals hidden away in the close cabinets and darksome crypts of creation. We cannot overstep, or descend beneath, the limits of His omnipresence. We live and breathe in the all-pervading and all-sustaining atmosphere of His goodness; all creatures, all worlds, are encircled with the girdle of His love, and were we each to look into the story of his individual life, and scan the lessons it records—to mark the manner in which He hath upheld us, and the way in which He hath led us through all its windings, from the first moments of our being until now—guarding

us from evil, watching over us for good, blessing us with our daily bread, and crowning us with hourly mercies —would not every day a new page in this large and growing chronicle be inscribed with the words, ‘In this was manifested the love of God to me?’”

But it was seldom that Burns gave his imagination wing, or permitted his intellect to exert all its power. A quaint, reflective sweetness was what he more constantly affected. He loved to bring out, with quiet but original force, some thought which would not occur to the common mind. An illustration is found in the comparison instituted in his little work, “The Heavenly Jerusalem,” between the rainbow which emblems God’s covenant with man, and the rainbow which, in the eternal heaven of God, is “round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.” The rainbow of earth, he says, opens “its seven stripes of colour out of the storm, like some beautiful flower of light. You see in it the holy emblem of God’s covenant with man,—Love’s device blazoned on heaven’s everlasting shield,—the signal-flag of hope and peace flying high in the tempest. All the secret lines of light are there, braided and woven, to vivify the type to the eye and heart of man. But in the ‘rainbow round the throne,’ all colours seem to mingle and flow into one, and that the softest and most refreshing to the eye. It is earth’s chosen colour, the household dress of our common mother, the emerald tint of spring, on which we love to look, and can look longest.” The rainbow of earth, in its heavenly col-

ours, is a presage of celestial glory; the rainbow of heaven, in its tender green, is a reminiscence of earth with its visitings of grace and its first experiences of redeeming love. You might expand this thought into a sermon, a poem, a volume; that would be easy, and above all would it have been easy for Burns; but he contents himself with the brief and simple statement of his beautiful, suggestive, original idea, and passes on.

After all, however, the most important characteristic to be noted in Mr Burns was his pervasive and fervent piety. In his heart's core there burned an unquenchable flame of love for Christ. Deeper than any words lay this feeling within him. Walking for nearly half his life-time in the shadow of death, he yet found the love of Christ able to make it light around him. "*In Christ*," he wrote, laying sweet emphasis on the words, "there is even now an Eden on earth, where *we may* walk with God." There is sublimity in the utterance when we view it as the testimony of one who knew so well what sore affliction is. "God," he says again, "has many ways of bringing His children home, but they all reach home at last." He did not repine at the way by which he was led. Rather he rejoiced in it, and took it for a sign of love. "It is not all,"—these are his words,—"who are privileged to suffer affliction. It is the sign and seal with which God marks His own chosen people. 'Whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth.'"

The friend, allied to Burns in genius, and bound to him with ties of warmest affection, who planned this memoir, and well-nigh completed its execution, did not live to finish it. Dr Hamilton could have summed up the character of Mr Burns as no other man will ever succeed in doing. Happily, however, we have a brief estimate of him from the pen of Hamilton, published soon after Burns's death in the *British and Foreign Evangelical Review*. With it we close. "Now that he is gone," he wrote, shortly after the grave had closed upon his beloved friend and brother, "it is our grief that we did not see more of him while living, and another grief that now, to the most of people, he must continue unknown. For he was quite uncommon. A lofty idealism, which cheerfully accepted homely realities, and a consummate scholarship, which never disdained the joys and sorrows of the poorest; a determination to know nothing amongst men save Christ crucified, along with a necessity to admire the wonders of creation and the glories of art; a width of sympathy and a range of acquirement which would have gladly made acquaintance with all the true and all the beautiful, but which with growing relish returned evermore to the simplicities of Scripture; a faith at home in the Westminster formulas; a fancy free of the universe; a taste which revelled in the dream-like descriptions of Camoëns and the mystic intuitions of Wordsworth, but which could lay down the favourite volume in order to visit a reformatory, or plead with

anxious eagerness the cause of some Christian mission; surely it was no common union, and even amongst ministers the man is rare in whom such attributes combine. In Mr Burns they met, and not only did their meeting occasion no conflict, but in his true and harmonious nature they so thoroughly coalesced, that it would have been hard to say which was the most genuine or characteristic outcome of the inner man, except in so far as of all affinities the most powerful are the mutual attractions of piety; and the delight which he found in ‘the saints, the excellent of the earth,’ as well as their delectation in him, showed plainly that the man of taste and the man of letters was still more entirely the man of God.”

HYMNS AND MISCELLANEOUS PIECES.

HYMNS AND MISCELLANEOUS PIECES.

LINES WRITTEN FOR AN ALBUM.

THROUGH fragrant groves and under cloudless skies
The stranger from a northern clime may roam,
The loveliness around may charm his eyes,
But in his heart he feels, It is not home !

And thus the Christian, wheresoe'er on earth
His lot may be, however bright and blest,
Looks upward to the country of his birth,
And longs for heaven, the home of endless rest.

MENTONE, *May 1864.*

“I MEDITATE IN THE NIGHT WATCHES.”

I MUSE, my Saviour, on the days,
Days ne'er forgot by Thee,
When walking on these earthly ways,
Thou didst remember me.

I call to mind Thy prayers upon
The hills of Galilee,
When, kneeling in the night alone,
Thou didst remember me.

I see Thee by Thy foes beset
 In dark Gethsemane,
 Where, swooning in Thy bloody sweat,
 Thou didst remember me.

Upon the cross I hear Thee cry
 " 'Tis finished," and I see,
 In the great woe of Calvary,
 Thou didst remember me.

And though Thou now from earth art gone,
 By faith I come to Thee,
 And know that, seated on Thy throne,
 Thou dost remember me.

Thy love my heart will ever guard,
 Dear will its memory be ;
 This night, and every night, O Lord,
 I will remember Thee.

“ FAINT YET PURSUING.”

FAINT yet pursuing ! on they press'd,
 That chosen band, nor thought of rest,
 Till their appointed work was done,
 And Israel's crowning victory won.

Faint yet pursuing ! let the sign,
 O soldier of the Cross ! be thine ;
 Grave the good legend on thy shield,
 And bear it thro' the battle-field.

Faint yet pursuing ! on thy breast
 Be this unfading seal impress'd,
 Repeat it to thy latest breath,
 And thus be faithful unto death.

Faint thou may'st be, thy foes are strong,
Thy strength is small, thy warfare long,
Yet in thy faintness fearless be,
For Christ hath won the fight for thee.

He bids thee follow where He leads,
He gives thee strength for holy deeds,—
Then fight, His hand directs the blow,
Pursue, His presence daunts the foe.

On in thy sacred warfare press,
Though faint, droop not for weariness,
Fight in the strength that He supplies,
Pursue, still looking to the prize.

Soon shall thy warfare here be o'er,
Thy foes be crush'd to rise no more,
Soon thou shalt see thy Captain come
To lead His faithful soldiers home.

Soon for the sword, He'll give the palm,
For battle-shout, the victor's psalm,
For faintness, Heaven's refreshing wine,
For weary warfare, rest divine.

THE HEAVENLY SHEPHERD.

ISA. xl. 11.

WE like sheep had gone astray,
In the desert lost our way ;
Weary, bleeding, bruised, and torn,
There we must have died forlorn,
Had not Jesus from above
Come to seek us in His love.

He a Shepherd is so good,
For the sheep He shed His blood

He so gentle is and mild,
That a very little child
May look up into His face,
Seeing there a smile of grace.

Only trust Him, you will find
None more faithful, none more kind ;
He will lead you night and day,
Walk before you all the way,
Through green meadows guide your feet,
And by waters clear and sweet.

Heavenly Shepherd, let me be
One of those who follow Thee ;
Let me know Thy pleasant voice,
Ever in Thy love rejoice ;
And when weary let me rest
Folded lamb-like on Thy breast.

Shepherd of the flock of God !
Guide and keep me with Thy rod
From the snares that round me lie,
From the foes that hover nigh ;
Guard me with Thy sleepless love
Till I reach Thy fold above.

THE DOVE AND THE ARK.

SWIFT is thy pinion,
Far hast thou flown :
Wide thy dominion,
Earth is thine own.

Long hast thou hover'd
O'er the bleak tide,
Nowhere discover'd
A place to abide.

All is so dreary
Above and below,
Now thou art weary,
Where wilt thou go ?

Wild the waves welter,
Night will be dark,
Haste thee for shelter,—
Flee to the Ark !

Sinner despising
God and His grace,
See the storm rising,
Night comes apace.

To Christ still a stranger,
Wilful and blind,
Where, in thy danger,
Hope canst thou find ?

Why shouldst thou wander ?
Dost thou not see
Christ the Ark yonder,
Waiting for thee ?

Thither but venture,
Haste thee from doom,
Free thou mayst enter,
Still there is room !

1861.

“ I will bring thee by a way that thou knowest not.”—ISA. xlvi. 16.

’Tis not the way that lay so bright before me,
When youth stood flush’d on Hope’s enchanted ground,
No cloud in the blue sky then bending o’er me,
No desert spot in all the landscape round.

Fair visions, glimmering through the distance, beckon'd
 My buoyant steps along the sunny way,
Sweet voices thrill'd me, till I fondly reckon'd
 That life would be one long, glad summer day.

This was the path my feet had gladly taken,
 And, blindly lured by that deceitful gleam,
I would have wander'd on by God forsaken,
 Till death awoke me from the fatal dream.

Alas ! in youth by Eden's gate we linger,
 In its green bowers we fain would make abode,
Till the stern angel-warder, with calm finger,
 Points the feet outward to the desert road.

My pleasant path in sudden darkness ended,
 My footsteps slipp'd, my hopes were well-nigh gone,
I could but pray, and as my prayer ascended,
 Thy face, O Father, through the darkness shone.

And by that light I saw the cross of trial,
 The landmark of the way my Saviour went,
The upward path of pain and self-denial,
 And thou didst point me to the steep ascent.

A way I knew not ! winding, rough, and thorny,
 So dark at times that I no path might see,
But Thou hast been my guide through all the journey,
 Its steepness has but made me lean on Thee.

And onward still I go in calm assurance
 That Thou wilt needful help and guidance lend,
That strength will come for every day's endurance,
 Grace all the way and glory at the end.

MOURNER IN THE DUST LOW-LYING.

MOURNER in the dust low-lying,
 Longing till the night be o'er,
 Hark! a voice to thine replying,
 Bids thee rise and weep no more.
 Hour by hour, as one forsaken,
 Thou hast shed thy silent tears ;
 Now thy God bids hope awaken,
 Thy Redeemer chides thy fears.

Long thy weary heart hath number'd
 All the watches of the night ;
 Long hast thou, while others slumber'd,
 Trimm'd thy lamp and kept it bright.
 Now the morning star appearing,
 Leads the day-spring up the skies ;
 Heavenly hopes thy heart are cheering,
 Endless glory glads thine eyes.

Lo! thy Lord so long departed,
 Turns thy darkness into day,
 Comes to heal the broken-hearted,
 And to wipe thy tears away.
 Ceased are now thy grief and sighing,
 Now thine anxious watch is o'er ;
 God's own voice to thine replying,
 Bids thee rise and weep no more.

THE clouds are driven across the skies,
 But high above them, in the blue,
 I see the silent stars like eyes
 Of holy watchers shining through.

The cloud has come—the cloud has gone—
 And gone the shadows cold and gray ;
 But the calm stars are shining on,
 And keep their everlasting way.

So to the pilgrim's eye ye shine,
 Ye bright realities of heaven ;
 So gleams your clear and radiant sign,
 Thro' clouds across our pathway driven.

Dreary and dark the way would be,
 And sad the hearts that o'er it roam
 If in your light we could not see,
 It is the way that leads us home.

" Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My Father, Thou art the guide of my youth ?" — JER. iii. 4.

ALONG a weary way we go,
 A way we fear to tread,
 For round it watches many a foe,
 And many a snare is spread.
 Unless Thou, Lord, our Leader be,
 Our feet must wander wide;
 From this time will we cry to Thee,
 O Father, be our Guide.

Thou Shepherd of the blood-bought sheep,
 Our fainting steps uphold ;
 Thy tender lambs in safety keep,
 And bear us to Thy fold.
 From every danger we are free
 While following at Thy side ;
 From this time will we cry to Thee,
 O Saviour be our guide.

Each day we see, our souls anew
 We cast upon Thy care,
 Each step we take life's journey thro'
 We ask Thy presence there ;
 Till we the better country see
 Where all Thy saints abide,
 Each day we live we'll cry to Thee,
 O Jesus, be our guide.

LAMENT OF DAVID OVER SAUL AND JONATHAN.

(Written at the age of 18.)

THE beauty of Israel lies low on her mountains,
And her mighty have fallen no more to arise,
The sun of her glory, which late from her fountains
Shower'd down his rich brilliance, hath set in her skies.

In the temples of Gath tell ye not the sad story,
In the wide street of Askelon speak not of Saul ;
For the daughter of Edom o'er Israel would glory,
And the uncircumciséd exult in her fall.

On thee, O Gilboa ! let no rain, freely falling,
Refresh thee by day, and no thick dews by night ;
For thee may no worshipper come to heaven calling,
Nor let the rich incense-cloud curl from thy height.

For on thy bloody plains, on that dark day of sorrow,
Were the shields of a nation cast basely away ;
And on that fatal field, ere had dawn'd the bright morrow,
Our host's gallant leader all silently lay.

Yes ! lay still in death, he, the Lord's own anointed,
And near him lay resting the son of his pride ;
Few fled far, 'gainst whom his sharp arrows were pointed,
And arm'd squadrons grew pale when his sword left his side.

Untrembling they stood while the war-shout was swelling,
Like the far-flashing vulture they rushed to the prey,
And though all the while their own death-dirge was knelling,
They stay'd not their steps till they fell in the fray.

When these two princely chieftains our proud armies guided,
They were lovely and pleasant all Israel can tell,
And that day in their deaths they were still not divided ;
Together they fought, and together they fell.

Like the eagle from far to his quarry swift sweeping,
They sped to the onset, nor stay'd in their path ;

Like the lion aroused, from his lair lightly leaping,
They smote each foeman whom they met in their wrath.

Weep, then, for the fallen, all Judah's fair daughters !
He cloth'd you with scarlet he won from the foe ;
Oh ! weep on our woodlands, and weep by the waters !
He who deck'd you with gold and with jewels lies low.

Lift ye the loud wailing, for deep on our mountains
The warrior is slumbering to waken no more ;
Oh ! let the hot tear, welling forth from its fountains,
Flow freely for him whose short life-dream is o'er.

For him who was bravest be wildest in wailing,
For Jonathan, death for his country who sought ;
Though his eye, dimm'd with death, saw the foeman prevailing,
He sheathed not his sword till he fell where he fought.

Very pleasant hast thou been to me, O my brother !
Not one know'th how sorely I've wept over thee ;
I loved thee, my best, as I ne'er loved another,
And stronger than woman's love thine was to me.

On the soft-speaking harp roll forth the sad numbers ;
Long shall Judah remember that foul, fatal day ;
The mighty are sleeping, and deep are their slumbers ;
Our best and our bravest all fell in the fray !

TO THE MEMORY OF SIR WALTER SCOTT.

(On the blank leaf of a volume of Scott's Poems, at the same age as the preceding.)

AH ! who shall soothly tell thy worth,
Sweet wizard-minstrel of the north ?
What muse shall sing, what tongue proclaim,
The praises of thy deathless name ?
Bright is the wreath of glory bound
Thy old and honour'd head around

Nor shall its lustre ere be less,
As days, and months, and years progress ;
But each, as silent time flows past,
Shall see it brighter than the last.
Thy harp is silent now, and mute
The whispers of thy breathing lute ;
For ever hush'd the honey'd tongue,
Which, while it moved, so sweetly sung
Of noble dame and gallant knight,
Of merry dance and hardy fight,
Of trumpet-blast and din of arms,
And lovely woman's winning charms ;
Of holy shrine and Gothic hall,
And warder on the castle wall,
And all the names of high degree
Wreath'd in the roll of chivalrie.
Though hush'd is now that silver tongue,
That music ceased, that harp unstrung ;
Though o'er that high and haughty brow
The thick grave-damps are gathering now ;
And though the rustling wild flowers wave
In fragrance, weeping o'er thy grave,
Thy spirit lives among us yet,
Thy memory we shall ne'er forget.
The voice which cried to thee, Depart !
Thrill'd deeply through a nation's heart ;
Their groans fell on thy closing ear,
Their tears dropp'd thickly on thy bier.
Thou seem'st to linger sadly still
Beside each silver-voic'd rill,
To hover o'er each heathery mountain,
And haunt each glen and fairy fountain ;
The beauties which thy master-hand
Strew'd thickly o'er thy father-land,
Have made thy dear, thy deathless fame,
Extend as far as Scotland's name.
Though distant may be many a shore
To which her sons have wander'd o'er,

The land which smiles 'neath northern skies
 Seems fairer far in all their eyes,
 Because she gave thy genius birth,
 Than the most favour'd spot of earth.
 Their children's children they shall tell
 To love the land thou lovedst so well,
 And in their days of weal or woe,
 On Afric's sand or Lapland's snow,
 Their hearts shall kindle at the thought
 That *Scotland* was the land of *Scott*!

THE JEW'S LAMENT.

(Written in Youth.)

No more on Judah's hills the song is heard,
 No more does prophet wake the living lyre,
 For ever silenced is each holy bard,
 And gone for ever is their heavenly fire.

No more the valiant hero conquering leads
 Judah's proud sons against their ruthless foes ;
 No more the warrior for his country bleeds,
 And dies to free her from her many woes.

Once did our noble temple proudly rear
 Its head, beloved by every true-born Jew,
 Now gilded mosque and minaret appear,
 Where turban'd Paynims chant their "Allah Hu!"

Thine ancient race, Lord, once so highly blest,
 Has now become the Gentile nation's scorn ;
 And 'midst the taunting heathen sore distressed,
 We sadly wander, wretched and forlorn.

Jehovah, hear us from Thy holy place,
 No longer may we thus be trodden down ;
 From us no longer hide Thy gracious face,
 Withdraw from Israel's seed Thy angry frown.

TO A FRIEND LEAVING ON A VOYAGE.

“ When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee.”

Go forth upon the lonely sea,
No evil can betide,
When He who walked on Galilee
Goes with thee as thy Guide.
Within the hollow of His hand
The weltering waters lie;
And on the sea, as on the land,
He keeps thee in His eye.

The friends who love thee for thy weal
Will often breathe their prayers;
But trust in Him and thou shalt feel
A better love than theirs.
When they shall watch across the wave
Thy gleaming sail grow dim,
The thought will cheer them that they gave
Thy keeping unto Him.

In weakness He will be thy stay,
In darkness be thy light;
His presence cheer the lonely day,
And soothe the sleepless night.
Thro’ all thy pilgrimage His grace
To guide thee will be given;
If here thou hast no resting-place,
The better home is heaven !

FALLEN LEAVES.

THE dead leaves danced about the tree
That shiver’d as the wind blew chill,
“ Come back, my children, come back to me;”
But the minstrel wind piped wild and shrill,
And the leaves whistled round in frantic glee,
And sang in their dance, “ We are free, we are free !”

“ Come back, my children, the boughs are bare,
 Where you whisper’d and play’d the summer long,
 With each wandering wind high up in the air,
 And wove green bowers for the birds of song ! ”
 But the dead leaves whirl’d around the tree,
 And sang as they danced, “ We are free, we are free ! ”

In a lull of the wind came a plaintive sigh,
 “ In the days that are past ye were bound in one
 To the same deep root. But now ye lie
 Fallen and faded and loosely blown,
 By the wind that sports with you for a day,
 And will tire of you soon and fling you away ! ”

“ Ye are free no more—ye are shiver’d and sere ;
 Soak’d with the rain and gnaw’d by the cold,
 Ye shall wither away ere spring be here,
 And be trodden down and raked in the mould ;
 But young green leaves shall come back to the tree,
 And sing in the wind, ‘ We are free, we are free ! ’ ”

December 1862.

LINES ON ELIZA COOTER, A BLIND AND DEAF MUTE.

It seemed to me a mournful sight
 That little room at first reveal’d,
 A child whose eyes were closed in night,
 Her lips in hopeless silence seal’d.
 Chain’d down by weakness to her bed,
 Her tender frame by suffering wrung, —
 “ A bitter lot is thine,” I said,
 “ A heavy cross for one so young ! ”

But, oh ! far otherwise I mused,
 When once I saw with glad surprise,
 How this meek lamb, so sorely bruised,
 To the Good Shepherd raised her eyes,

How patient on His breast she lay,
And kiss'd the hand of chastening love,
And bless'd the dark and rugged way
That led her to His fold above !

Sweet child, so greatly tried and blest,
Thou soon wilt lay thy burden down ;
The rougher road, the happier rest,
The heavier cross, the brighter crown.
For days of darkness yet to thee
Shall everlasting light be given ;
And the first face that thou shalt see
Will be thy Saviour's face in heaven.

That fetter'd tongue, here mute so long,
Shall burst its bonds in sudden praise ;
Its first glad words will be the song
Which round the throne the ransom'd raise.
From sufferings freed and free from sin,
And in unclouded light to shine,—
If faith can such a triumph win,
Sweet child, a blessed lot is thine !

Family Treasury, 1859.

THE CHARGE OF THE SEVEN HUNDRED.

THEY flung their hearts forward
At the bugle's stern breath,
Seven hundred cavaliers
Riding proudly to death ;
In the strength of dear honour
Their sabres they drew,
And went on with no armour
But good hearts and true.

They saw the red match
By each black-throated gun,
They knew that the foemen
Were a hundred to one,

But in grand consecration,
 And breathing calm breath,
 Our seven hundred cavaliers
 Rode proudly to death.

The battle coil'd round them
 The drift of its smoke,
 Like a red streak of flame
 Through the whirlwind they broke.
 They felt their blood tingle
 With immortal desire,
 And grasp'd wildly at glory
 Through the tempest of fire.

Ye earn'd it, brave hearts,
 Each man as 'ye fell
 Clenching fast the good weapon
 That won it so well.
 Alas ! that our best blood
 Should pour forth like rain,
 To cleanse the bright honour
 Which never knew stain.

Sleep, last-born of glory,
 Sleep well with your fame,
 On the pillar of story
 Ye have carved a deep name,—
 Half sadness—half gladness—
 Song's life-giving breath
 Hails the seven hundred cavaliers
 Who rode proudly to death.

THE DAUGHTER OF JEPHTHAH TO HER FATHER.

My father ! tears are in thine eye,
 Thy manly bosom heaves with sadness,
 O why should household agony
 Profane the day of Israel's gladness ?

Let not one thought of me alloy
The festive time with fruitless sorrow ;
Be this a day of sacred joy,
And think of me, and weep to-morrow !

I came to meet thee with my peers,
Our timbrels rang to choral dances,
I saw afar the gleam of spears,
And sought thee out with anxious glances.
And soon I found thee, but thy brow
Grew dark to thy beloved's greeting,
I knew not then, as now I know,
What made it such a mournful meeting.

Alas ! I then had little thought
That meeting was our life-long parting—
That nature's love, which in me wrought
That impulse, passionately starting,
Had stung my father's heart with pain,
Had made him curse his bitter error,—
Yet were it all to do again,
My love would overcome my terror.

Now time is fading from my view—
Slow opens death its gloomy portal ;
I mourn not that my days are few,—
For on me breaks a light immortal,—
I grieve that thou art left alone,
That through these darkening years another
Must do for thee what I had done,
And she no daughter of my mother.

O lay me where—beside the palm
In yonder vale—my mother sleepeth,
Where, blowing from the groves of balm,
The evening wind so softly creepeth.
And thou wilt sometimes, with a sigh,
Remember her who loved thee dearly ;
What quench'd the brightness of her eye,
And made her sun go down so early.

I go, a virgin sacrifice,
To stand before Death's purple altar :
And bind no fillet round mine eyes,
Though thou must strike, I will not falter ;
The blood that fills my veins is thine,
And I were not my father's daughter
Did I not make his honour mine,
And pour it on the earth like water !

TYRE.

THY waters, Tyre, once hail'd thee queen,
A crown was on thy brow,
On every sea thy ships were seen—
Where is thy glory now ?

Where once thou wast in splendour set,
Thy place is known no more,
And the poor fisher spreads his net
Upon thy silent shore.

Yet in thy silence we may hear
A warning sent abroad,
And on thy shatter'd rocks see clear
The finger-marks of God.

On us has dawn'd a glorious light,
Which never shone on thee ;
May we to those who dwell in night
Its willing heralds be.

May our swift ships of Tarshish bear
The gospel o'er the wave,
Till every land and people hear
That Jesus died to save.

NINEVEH.

Rise up, long buried city ! rise,
The wondrous tale unfold,
Bring up again before our eyes
The pride and pomp of old.

Throw off the mask that hid thy face,
Throw back the funeral pall ;
That by thy grave we may retrace
Thy glory and thy fall.

That in the desert we may hear
Another voice, anew
Proclaim to every careless ear
The Word of God is true !

Like Jonah preach, and from the tomb
Thy voice of warning send ;
Tell men that sin is mark'd for doom,
And must in ruin end.

And tell each fearful heart, the Lord
Is true and faithful still,
And will each promise of His word
As righteously fulfil !

THE CHERRY TREE.

(From the German. 1860.)

To His servant Spring, the good God said,
" For the poor little worm a table spread ! "
Straight on the cherry-tree there were seen
Thousands of leaflets fresh and green.

The poor little worm woke up, and crept
From the cell where all winter long it had slept ;
It rubb'd its eyes in a dreamy mood,
And open'd its little mouth for food.

And with slow, silent tooth it gnaw'd away
The little green leaflets on many a spray,
And it said to itself, " This is very good,—
'Tis quite a feast on such delicate food ! "

To His servant Summer, the good God said,
" For the poor little bee a table spread ! "
Straight the tree all over was bright
With thousands of blossoms fresh and white.

Soon as the morning redd'n'd the east,
The little bee flew from his hive to the feast,
And humm'd to himself, " This is pleasant juice,—
Can such nice little china cups be for my use ?

" So clean and so white the cups are, let me dip
My tongue into each, and the sweet juice sip ! "
So from cup to cup he flutters and drinks.
" This year there is no want of sugar," he thinks.

Then to Summer the good God said,
" For the poor little bird a table spread ! "
Straight for each blossom came fruit instead,
Thousands of cherries so fresh and red.

The wren and the sparrow then flew to the tree,
Each chirrup'd and said, " Is this meant for me ?
Here let us feast the whole summer long,
And our throats will be clear and sweet for song ! "

Then to Autumn the good God said,
" Clear the table—the children have fed ! "
Quickly a cold wind blew from the hill,
And its breath was hoar-frost, dank, and chill.

And the leaves turn'd yellow, and red, and brown,
At each breath of the breeze they came rustling down ;
What had come from earth return'd to earth,
And died on the bosom that gave it birth.

Last to Winter the good God said,
 “ Over all that is left a mantle spread ! ”
 Quickly the snow-flakes began to fall,
 Wrapping them up in a close, white pall.

BETHLEHEM.

O HAPPY place that heard the voice
 Of angels singing sweet ;
 That saw the star which sages led
 To the Redeemer’s feet ;
 That held the lowly dwelling where
 The heavenly Child was born,
 And saw the shepherds worship there
 Upon that wondrous morn !

Oh may my heart, Lord, through Thy grace,
 A little Bethlehem be !
 Though it should know no other guest,
 May there be room for Thee !

Its door would open to Thy knock,—
 Come in, Thou blessed One !
 Abide with me, and dwell in me,
 And make me Thine alone.

I have no gold, nor frankincense,
 Nor fragrant myrrh to bring ;
 My love is all I have to give,
 Accept the offering !

A REMINISCENCE.

(Suggested by a scene passed on his journey to Edinburgh in May 1863.
 Written at Mentone, 1864.)

IT was a singular fancy
 That flash’d on my mind to-day,

As through the fair shifting landscape
I was whirled on the iron way.

Fringed with green rushes and lilies,
With no ripple to fret its flow,
A river sail'd on through broad meadows,
All bright with a vernal glow.

The meadows sloped gently downwards
To the river's clear brimming tide,
Overwaved with sweet May blossom
A hedgerow skirted its side,

And knee-deep in the rich pasture
The white kine wander'd at will,
Or couch'd beneath an old elm-tree,
Where the shadows were cool and still.

A picture so bright and so peaceful,
So touch'd with a pastoral grace,
The spirit of some old Greek idyl
Seemed to breathe in the silent place.

Far over the sunny meadows
A gloomy oak-forest cast
A broad black belt of shadow
From an immemorial past.

And dimly seen over its umbrage
Rose a castle moulder'd and gray,
Its walls and its turrets embattled
Still standing the siege of decay ;

The hold of some grim old baron,
In the stormy feudal years,
Who oft through its portals had sallied
With a clash and glitter of spars.

And sudden there came the impression,
As I gazed on this tranquil scene,
That here, at some time dim-remember'd,
Like a former life, I had been.

Methought that before my glances
A familiar vision did pass,
The reflection of some old picture
Still mirror'd in memory's glass.

A mood of strange contradiction,
When the mind sees things in a trance,
And dreams of a former existence
Float vaguely before its glance.

Now, thus as my mind was divided,
I saw two men on the way,
The open highway unshadow'd,
Which white in the sunshine lay.

They came to a stile in the hedgerow
Which into the meadows went,
And, weary and hot with travel,
On its moss-grown bar they leant.

They gazed on the soft deep herbage,
With a gaze that was long and fond,
On the broad, cool, slumb'rous shadow
Of the green forest-chase beyond.

They felt its subtle attraction,
They thought of the dust and heat,
And over the stile they clamber'd,
And the grass to their tread was sweet.

I saw them go slowly onwards
To the ancient and solemn wood,
I saw the gray walls and turrets
That in mystical stillness stood.

And I thought, these twain are pilgrims,
Who to the far city fare,
They have stray'd from the path, and yonder
Is the hold of Giant Despair.

Then I knew that oft in my boyhood,
On a calm bright Sabbath tide,
In these fair meadows I wander'd
With Bunyan as my guide.

THE FIRST HYACINTH.

No sign was in the hard dry root
Of treasures at its heart conceal'd,
No promise gave the slender shoot
Of the rich blossom it would yield.

And, as we watch'd from day to day
The stalk unfold in winter glooms,
We little thought it would display
This coronal of clustering blooms.

By slow degrees, sweet flower, thou hast
Unto thy perfect beauty come;
We gave thee shelter from the blast,
Thou bringest summer to our home.

So meek and white in virgin grace,
So sweetly scenting all the air,
Surely the first of all thy race
In Eden did not blow more fair.

Yet on thy loveliness full blown,
We gaze with something like a sigh,
To think the bloom one day has shown,
Must in another droop and die.

Is not the bud that hopes to bloom,
Though slowly opening in the shade,
More happy than the flower whose doom
Is in the sun to stand and fade?

Is it not better to aspire
And rise still higher than before,

Than to be all that we desire,
And feel that we can be no more?

No! lovely flower, thou art content
Thy law of being to fulfil,
For the brief season thou wert sent,
Meekly to do thy Maker's will.

Thou hast thy soul of fragrance breathed,
Thy stainless bloom hath cheer'd the eye,
And with such memories bequeathed,
Methinks that thou mayst gladly die.

The flowerless season of the year
Sweeter and brighter was for thee,
And when my life's green leaves are sear,
May some one say as much for me!

1862.

A THOUGHT ON THE SEA.

In that far heaving sea I trace
The varied aspect of the sky,
It lies reflecting in its face
The changeful glance of Heaven's own eye.

To-day beneath that genial glance
Its waves in azure beauty sleep,
Above, below, one calm expanse,
Deep calling in a dream to deep.

But let the cloudless skies assume
A vaporous veil or stormy pall,
How soon the shadow and the gloom
Would o'er the restless waters fall.

So heaven beholds as in a glass
Its image stamp'd in light or shade,
From smiles to frowns the waters pass
True to the signs on high display'd.

Oh that my heart thus open lay
 To influence from the higher sphere,
 That it would keep from day to day
 Eternal truths reflected clear.

Oh that the sanctities of heaven
 Would stamp on it their image fair,
 And visions by the Spirit given,
 Abide in mild reflection there.

That it would only joy when light
 Dawn'd on it from God's glance benign,
 And only mourn when from its sight
 Some cloud had veil'd the sacred sign.

LINES.

It is a false and treacherous light
 That shines around us here ;
 The things that glitter in our sight
 Are not what they appear !
 Honour is but a wandering breath,
 And fame is but a gleam ;
 And all remembrance after death
 A shadow and a dream.

The happy life for which we task
 Our minds from youth to age,
 Is nothing but a painted mask
 Upon a hollow stage.
 And men will urge perpetual strife
 With Being's highest laws,
 And spurn the o'erhanging Crown of Life,
 To rake some paltry straws.

How long will men shut out the light
 That comes too late in death ?
 How long so madly walk by sight,
 And scorn the voice of Faith ?

The shapes that hover'd round our way
Whilst wandering dimly here,
At cockerow of the eternal day
Shall melt and disappear.

LINES.

I HAVE loved and woo'd thee long,
Gentle Song !
I have felt thy wondrous art
Stir my blood and thrill my heart,
All my being as a sense
Quicken with a life intense ;
Faintly heard thy silver tone,
Seen afar thy starry glances,
And my deepest joy has grown
From thy whispers and thy fancies.

Circling Seasons, Day and Night
Bring delight
To thy votarist, while he
Over nature ranges free.
Skies and waters, light and air,
All reflect one image fair.
But, alas ! he shrinks from Life,
Walks among the crowd in sadness ;
Feels his gift, amidst the strife,
Oftener link'd with tears than gladness.

At evening time it shall be light,
Though clouds at dawn may swathe the heaven ;
Though winds and rain, and mist and blight,
Across the lowering day be driven.
Stand thou unshaken in thy place,
And fix thy glance upon the sky,
At last a gleam will reach thy face,
A heavenly gleam that will not die.

LINES.

(Written in early life.)

THERE is love which springs up in a moment of gladness,
 That can bloom a short summer, and wither as fast ;
 But the love that has slowly grown strong amidst sadness
 Is rooted far deeper, and longer will last.

In the depth of our spirit that passion we cherish,
 There it smiles a sweet vision through sunshine and shade—
 A clear lasting star, its light never shall perish
 Till the heart that it gladden'd itself has decay'd.

Though sad death from the sight the beloved may sever,
 The heart to its hope is still faithful and true ;
 And the memory of joy that has vanish'd for ever]
 Is dearer than all that allures in the view.

That chord in the heart is still mournfully ringing,
 Though the voice that once thrill'd it for ever is gone,—
 As the branch that the nightingale perch'd on while singing
 Will quiver though from it the sweet bird has flown.

THE AVE OF SAÔ JORGE.

THE mountains like eternal ramparts keep
 Watch round it, in their shadow sunk it lies
 A little Eden, azure-domed by skies
 Whose fluent sunlight falls on it like sleep.
 Birds haunt its delicate air, meadow and steep
 Are muffled thick with vines ; through rents in the green
 Of chestnut forests, cottages are seen,
 And upwards thin blue smoke-wreaths slowly creep.
 Ocean's calm fulfilling waters bound
 The vale, and chaunt their everlasting psalm,
 Response eliciting from the entranced shore.
 Beauty walks here with constant step and calm ;
 Alas ! that while its bloom may still be found,
 The innocence of Eden lives no more !

JAAL AND SISERA.

“TURN in,” she said, and gently press’d
The fainting chief to go ;
“The heaviest heart forgets in rest
Its weariness and woe.
For water I will bring thee milk,
And soft thy couch will be ;
The cruel foe shall never know
That thou art safe with me !”

He turn’d him to the tent and drank,
She cast her mantle round
His weary limbs, and fast he sank
In slumbers on the ground.
And then with murder’s muffled tread
Upon his sleep she stole,
Those fingers frail drove deep the nail,
And death woke up the soul.

So pilgrim ! still along thy way
The tents of Kedar lie,
Beware—they court but to betray,
Thou enterest but to die !
Though faint and weary do not thou
Into their secret come—
Seek no repose amidst the foes,
And distant from thy home.

The angry threat thou mayst despise,
But dread the secret wile ;
For malice masks in flattery’s guise,
And death can wear a smile.
With patient foot and trustful heart,
Hold on thy way till even—
Sweet is the rest that waits the blest,
Upon the hills of heaven !

THE NIGHTINGALE.

HARK ! to the sudden rushes of that flood
Of sound that deluges the midnight wood !
Hark ! to the ravishing falls, the lute-like trills
With which the sobbing bird the silence fills !
From the sweet tumult of those revelling notes,
A wind of wandering music creeps and floats,
Far down the dim and starlight-drench'd air,
What time the slumbrous heavens are blue and bare !
And now it languishes, and now it swells,
And now it sinks to deep and sad farewells.
Again, with passionate art he doth prolong
The rich thick gurgles of his tearful song ;
Then pours it forth by slowly-trickling drops,
Till in a swoon of melody he stops !

LINES WRITTEN IN AN ALBUM.

No more on earth wilt thou behold the face
Which love once lighted with a tender glow ;
No more be folded in the fond embrace,
The fondest and the purest earth can know.

'Twas but a few short years thy childhood knew—
What life can know but once—a mother's care,
To train for heaven thy nature as it grew,
And shield it from the world's ungenial air.

Ah ! many an anxious thought was hers for thee,
Many a strong prayer went up to mercy's throne,
In hallow'd moments when she bent the knee,
And her meek spirit spoke to God alone.

Those lips are silent now, those prayers are o'er,
Cold lies the loving heart beneath the sod ;
But her bright memory lives for evermore
To light the path that leads her child to God.

True to the dear example she bequeath'd
To Him thy young affections upward send ;
Be this the first fond wish thy spirit breathes,
To make her God thy guide, her soul thy friend.

Christ's dying eye upon His mother fell,
He from His cross to Mary gave a home ;
Thy mother now doth with the Saviour dwell,
And from the throne He bids thee also come.

Once for her sake an earthly home was dear,
Oh, think that in a fairer home than this
Her spirit waits, after brief parting here,
To welcome thee to never-ending bliss.

SONNET—MENTONE.

In dreams of some long-faded loveliness—
Half garden and half woodland—have I seen
A haunt like this, shut in with closed screen
Of foliage,—where the silvery mistiness
Of olives fills the wild and sweet recess
With tenderest sunlight,—and in air serene
The citron glitters, and from thickest green
A lone bird's warble breaks the silentness.
Guided by thee, my life's own gentle guide,
When first within this fragrant shade I stood
There seem'd into my inmost soul to glide
A blessed peace and health, like cool hand laid
On fever'd brow, a thrill of gratitude
And joy in this fair world which God hath made.

LINES.

DIM were the gray-hair'd minstrel's eyes,
His harp was sobbing to the chime
Of sadly mingling memories,
A tale of ancient time.

The rosebud on its stalk may die,
Though not unwater'd by the dew,
All that on earth delights the eye
May fade as quickly too.

The bells rang for the bridal night
From all the towers of Königstein,
The lattice lamps were lit and bright,
They twinkled on the Rhine.
Guests fill'd the old baronial hall,
And loud the shouts of wassail rung,
The minstrels all the festival
Unto their citterns sung.

The old king, with a heart elate,
Call'd for a cup to pledge the bride,
And glanced with fondness where she sate,
With Siegmund by her side.
Up sprung the guests through all the hall,
And loud the shouts of wassail rung,
And clear above the festival
The minstrels play'd and sung.

She rose, and to the bridal room
She pass'd amidst her maidens four ;
She enter'd in her maiden bloom,
But forth came never more !
The rosebud on its stalk hath died,
Though not unwater'd by the dew,—
And she, the prince and people's pride,
Hath faded where she grew !

TO FLORA.

AH ! fondly loved, while thou wert here,
Still fondly loved, lamented sore ;
Thy memory to the heart is dear—
Dear till the heart can beat no more.
Still we behold thy gentle face,
Thy soft blue eyes, thy golden hair,
Thine image, in immortal grace,
For ever shining bright and fair.

The place where thy dear ashes sleep
Is far away beyond the wave ;
No friend is near, no kindred keep
Their watch above thy lonely grave.
The sun may shine, the rain may fall,
The winds around thee make their moan,
But thou, the best beloved of all,
Art sleeping thy last sleep alone.

Yet why should tears bedim our eyes ?
Why should the heart with grief be riven ?
'Tis but thy dust in dust that lies,
Thy spirit lives with Christ in heaven.
There thou, in spotless innocence,
Dost ever on His bosom lie,
A lily, early gather'd hence
To bloom in climes beyond the sky.

Thou wert the sunshine of the home
Which is so dark without thee now ;
But thou to God's own light art come,
And angel-lips have kiss'd thy brow.
Thy joyous voice once thrill'd the heart,
Like music's softest, sweetest tone,
Now hush'd on earth, it bears a part
In the high anthem round the throne.

From all the ills and griefs of time
 Thou art for ever well away ;
 Thy home is in the cloudless clime,
 While we in darkness wait for day.
 And why should sorrow haunt us thus,
 For one from sorrow ever free ?
 Sweet child, thou wouldest not come to us ;
 Oh, be it ours to go to thee !

1859.

WRITTEN AT HASTINGS, 1860.

ALONG the shell fringe of the bay
 I hear the rippling water's flow,
 O'er the green waves, in restless play,
 The lights and shadows come and go.

Swift as the ruffling breezes range
 O'er ocean's wide and clear expanse,
 Its tints, in wavering interchange,
 Like gleams of opal flash and glance.

But for the clouds that float on high
 No shifting lights would sparkle there ;
 O'rvaulted by an azure sky
 The waters were not half so fair.

But for the breeze that o'er the deep
 Goes forth careering wild and free,
 It would but lie in idle sleep,
 A glittering, blank monotony.

And so, belovèd, 'twere not wise
 To wish this serious life of ours
 Could know but calm and sunny skies,
 And count but bright and smiling hours.

So might it run to selfish waste,
 Worthless, though brilliant it might seem,
 Its trembling hopes and pleasures based
 On the duration of a dream.

'Tis change and trial that have power
To throw on life a light divine,
And make it in its darkest hour
With Faith's celestial radiance shine.

Let windy storm and tempest blow,
Let clouds their frowning shadows cast,
If Patience, Love, and Wisdom grow,
And Hope gleam brightly to the last.

LIFE.

SHORT at the longest,
Frail at the strongest,
Flame of a taper,
Foam of a river,
Ocean's weak spray,—
Frost-work so brittle,
It shrinks from a ray;
Breath of a vapour,
Seen for a little,
Then fading away.

Yet, as thou fliest,
Bringing from heaven
The best and the highest
Hopes ever given;
Precious thy moments,
Rich thy bestowments,
Let my hand grasp them,
Let my heart clasp them,—
And on Time's brink
The glory foreseeing,

I know life is mine,
Immortal, divine,

By a gold link
 That death cannot sever,
 God to His Being
 Hath bound mine for ever.

1860.

“AARON'S ROD.”

On the green parent-tree the dew stood clear
 In some far moonlit dell;
 Upon the rod of Aaron, peel'd and sear,
 That night no dewdrop fell.

Once in the sheaf of symbol wands 'twas laid
 At eve before the ark,
 Where the pale fire of the Shekinah ray'd
 A glory through the dark.

A sudden thrill of spring-time through it shot,
 Quick juices swell its core,—
 'Tis green as the wet sprig of olive brought
 To Noah's prison door.

Thy hand, O God, around the stem a wreath
 Of snowy blossom weaves,
 And clustering almonds in their silken sheath
 Hang ripe among the leaves.

Leafless and dead the rival wands were found
 When the gray dawning came;
 That rod alone had bloom'd on holy ground
 Which bore Thy Aaron's name.

So, Lord, I come into Thy holy place,
 Before Thine ark I lie,
 A wither'd branch that bears no flower of grace,
 No fruit to please Thine eye.

Hour after hour drags on the weary night,
I wait Thy blessed will,
That some reviving ray of Thine own light
May through my being thrill.

Oh, in the night-watch may Thy Spirit's breath
My inmost soul pervade !
Blow, heavenly wind ! dissolve this frost of death
In which I am decay'd !

Thou, who to the small hyssop gav'st of old
Its purifying power,
Canst change the poorest weed of earthly mould
To a celestial flower.

Each germ of evil from my heart root out ;
Sow there that holy seed
Whence the sweet flowers of Christian virtue sprout,
And fruits of Christian deed.

Thus let me find in Thy pure temple air
My time of spring, O God,
And in life's darkest night still flourish fair,
Like this unwithering rod.

Thy sunshine falls on many a fruitless tree ;
But in affliction's gloom
Thy garden plants, O Lord, exhale to Thee
Their sweetest scent and bloom.

HYMN FOR A NEW YEAR.

“Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee.”—
DEUT. viii. 2.

As on a hill-top gained at last,
By many a step, we stand to-day,
To look behind us on the past,
Before us on o'er our future way.

A year of Sabbaths come and gone,
 Months bright with mercies meet our gaze ;
 Thy hand, O God, hath led us on,
 Thy goodness claims our song of praise.

Within Thy house can we forget
 Our Father's love, so rich and free ?
 Can we forget the mighty debt,
 Our Saviour, that we owe to Thee ?

Oh may the year that now begins,
 Behold us choose the heavenward way,
 Redeem the time, forsake our sins,
 And follow Thee, Lord, day by day.

To-day to each the choice is given,
 How long it may be, who can tell,—
 On this side lies the bliss of heaven,
 On that the awful gloom of hell.

Jesus, Thy pleading look we see,
 Thy wounded hands, Thy thorn-wreathed brow—
 Help us to yield our hearts to Thee,—
 To yield them all, and yield them now.

NEW YEAR'S HYMN.

“Thou crownest the year with Thy goodness.”—Ps. lxv. 11.

At Thy feet, our God and Father,
 Who hast bless'd us all our days,
 We with grateful hearts would gather,
 To begin the year with praise.

Praise for light so brightly shining
 On our steps from heaven above,
 Praise for mercies daily twining
 Round us golden cords of love.

Jesus! for Thy love most tender,
On the cross for sinners shown,
We would praise Thee and surrender
All our hearts to be Thine own.

With so bless'd a Friend provided,
We upon our way would go,
Sure of being safely guided,
Guarded well from every foe.

Every day will be the brighter
When Thy gracious face we see,
Every burden will be lighter
When we know it comes from Thee.

Spread Thy love's broad banner o'er us,
Give us strength to serve and wait,
Till the glory breaks before us
Through the City's open gate.

TRANSLATIONS OF GERMAN HYMNS.

“O LITTLE FLOCK, BE NOT AFRAID !”

(From the German of Gustavus Adolphus.—His Battle Song at Lützen.)

O LITTLE flock, be not afraid,
Though foes around thee stand array'd,
 To scatter and destroy thee.
What though their malice and their plots
Have caused thee many anxious thoughts,
 They shall not long annoy thee.

Thy cause is God's—then cease to grieve ;
With Him who claims it vengeance leave,
 Look up to Him as reigning ;
He, through His Gideon, whom He knows,
Will succour thee and smite thy foes,
 Thee and His word maintaining.

As God is God, His truth must stand ;
The devil and the world may band,
 But woe to their alliance.
They shall beneath our feet be trod,
God is with us, and we with God :
 We bid them all defiance.

“LORD, I COME, THY GRACE ADORING.”

LORD, I come, Thy grace adoring,
Which on me is ever pouring,
Through Thy Spirit's blessed light ;
Which, to thousand hearts is showing,
By its thousand mercies flowing,
Its unbounded depth and height.

Should I not myself surrender
Unto Thee, whose love so tender
Watches ever on my ways ?
Turning even the great afflictions
Of my heart to benedictions,
Which can lighten darkest days.

Lord, this heart I would devote it
To Thy service, who hast sought it
Thine own glory to fulfil ;
Unto Thee it would be cleaving,
Former sins and follies leaving,
With a pure and upright will.

Through Thy power, may I, despising
Earth, to heaven be upward rising ;
Draw, oh draw me, unto Thee,
That I may renew'd, converted,
Through Thy Spirit's grace anointed,
Daily feel Thee dwell in me.

Make my heart a garden, nourish
Holy graces, which may flourish
With their sweet maturity.
Open Thou Life's well, which ever,
Like a clear and limpid river,
Flows into eternity.

All life's aims and heart's affection
I resign to Thy direction,
Jesus, help and strengthen me.

One with Thee, and in Thee dwelling,
 May my soul, Thy praises telling,
 Yield eternal love to Thee !

ANGELUS SILESITS.

“ALL THE SAINTS WILL MEET ON HIGH.”

ALL the saints will meet on high,
 Where their heart and treasure lie,
 Where their life already is,
 Where their Saviour reigns in bliss.

One by one the good remove
 To their better home above ;
 Nor are we, who loved them dear,
 Ask'd if we would keep them here.

Yet God's darkest ways are wise ;
 And when He severely tries,
 He would have us to be still,
 Resting quiet in His will.

Many a heart that beats no more,
 Thrills the spirit to its core ;
 Yet, O Jesus ! Thine we be,
 We have all while we have Thee.

ZINZENDORF.

“FROM THEE, O FAITHFUL GOD.”

FROM Thee, O faithful God,
 Must come all peace and union ;
 Thy grace Thy people calls
 To brotherly communion.
 Concord is Thy delight,
 Thy favour its reward,
 Thou teachest us to love
 And follow it, O Lord.

Wherfore to Thee we pray
 For Thy good Spirit's blessing,
 That all of us may be
 Our heart in peace possessing.
 Oh may we all our mind
 In truth and goodness keep,
 That so united we
 The fruits of peace may reap.

May each to all become
 A balsam sweet and healing,
 That each afflicted heart
 In trouble may be feeling
 What comfort and support
 From sympathy may flow,
 And that no brother's heart
 Can slight a brother's woe.

Oh let us always dwell
 In unity together;
 May Thy forbearing grace
 Still comfort us, O Father!
 Among Thy waiting saints
 May concord still increase,
 Till out of strife we reach
 Heaven's everlasting peace!

“HEAVEN, AND EARTH, AND SEA, AND AIR.”

HEAVEN, and earth, and sea, and air
 Still their Maker's praise declare,
 Thou, my soul, as loudly sing,
 To thy God thy praises bring.

See the sun His power awakes
 As through clouds his glory breaks;
 See the moon and stars of light
 Praising God in stillest night.

See how God this rolling globe
 Swathes with beauty like a robe ;
 Forests, fields, and living things
 Each its Maker's glory sings.

Through the air Thy praises meet,
 Birds are singing clear and sweet—
 Fire, and storm, and wind, Thy will
 As Thy ministers fulfil.

The ocean waves Thy glory tell,
 At Thy touch they sink and swell ;
 From the well-spring to the sea,
 Rivers murmur, Lord, of Thee.

Ah, my God, what wonders lie
 Hid in Thy infinity !
 Stamp upon my inmost heart
 What I am, and what Thou art.

J. NEANDER.

“ WONDERFUL AND BLESS'D.”

WONDERFUL and bless'd
 Ruler of all living,
 Oh accept of our thanksgiving !
 To us streams of mercy
 Daily Thou art sending,
 Though we daily are offending.
 Grant us still
 Power and will,
 That our heart may bless Thee,
 And our mouth confess Thee !

Shout your Maker's glory,
 O ye heavens vaulted,
 Sound afar His name exalted !
 Sun whose light illumines

Earth, still onward rolling,
 Be His wondrous power extolling !
 Praise His might
 Stars of light,
 All His works adore Him,
 Brightly ranged before Him !

Thou, my soul, sing gladly,
 Mingling in the praises
 Every living creature raises ;
 Sing perpetual anthems,
 Laud and adoration
 To the God of thy salvation !
 Bless and own
 Him alone,
 Of all good the giver,
 To be praised for ever !

Sing loud halleluiah
 All His saints together,
 All in Christ who call Him Father !
 Praise Him and believe,
 Who with spirit fervent
 Is the Saviour's loving servant !
 Well mayst thou
 Praise Him now,
 Till in heaven before Him
 Sinless thou adore Him !

“GOD IS LOVE, SING LOUD BEFORE HIM.”

God is love, sing loud before Him,
 Love which lasts for evermore ;
 Through the Spirit's grace adore Him,
 Ye whose hearts have felt its power.

Were His holy zeal outflaming,
 It would burn as deep as hell ;
 Now His name of love proclaiming,
 All the heavens His glory tell.

Love, which He reveals and teaches
 When we in the Son believe ;
 Love, which in its farthest reaches
 Mind of man can ne'er conceive.
 Love, how wide, o'er all extending,
 Long ! its length all years exceeds,
 Deep ! to sinners lost descending,
 High ! as high as heaven it leads.

Love, my heart may safe repose in,
 Though to thought a boundless deep,
 Let not him who hates God's chosen,
 Thy sweet comfort from me keep.
 Love ! oh, be it my endeavour
 Still to know thee as thou art,
 Love ! teach me to sing for ever
 To thy Giver with the heart !

HILLER.

“HELP ME TO PRAY, LORD.”

HELP me to pray, Lord ! and make supplication
 Through me and in me in all time of need ;
 With my own fire if I make my oblation,
 Vainly for mercy and blessing I plead.
 Only the prayers of Thy priesthood unfailing
 Into the Holiest enter prevailing !

Help me to pray, Lord ! oh, plead with my pleading,
 I have no power, no wisdom to pray ;
 If Thou, Mediator, art not interceding,
 Prayer is labour thrown idly away.
 Thou must inspire it, if grace ever reach me,
 “Abba !” the password, Thy Spirit must teach me.

Help me to pray, Lord, and gladden Thy servant !
 Cast out all fear with Thy love-giving breath ;
 Make me more cheerful, confiding, and fervent,
 Touch and keep moving the springs of my faith.
 Let all my incense rise sweet from Thy censer,
 Each prayer, O Advocate, echo and answer.

Help me to pray, Lord, and reach to the blessing !
 Breathe the right thought, and impart the right word,
 In trouble and death may prayer ever pressing,
 Weighty and childlike, be granted me, Lord.
 Prayer from all sorrow can save us—it frees us
 Even from death. Yes ; Thou helpst us, Jesus !

PH. HEINR. WEISSENSEE.

“ WE MEET, O LORD, WITH VOICE AND HEART.”

We meet, O Lord, with voice and heart
 Thy holy name confessing,
 Thou, Son of man, the Sower art,
 Who sows the seeds of blessing.
 The field extends the world around,
 Oh plant now in the barren ground
 The children of Thy kingdom !

Yes, First-born, Sovereign Lord of all,
 Who sit in kingly stations,
 Thou yet wilt see before Thee fall,
 Adoring, all the nations.
 This we believe, and summon'd now
 To this great work, we hope that Thou
 Wilt bless the seed we scatter.

Already sprouts some tender seed,
 The blade the ear preceding ;
 We praise Thee, Lord, and praise would lead
 To still more fervent pleading.

How small as yet Thy garden's bound,
 How wide the wilderness around,
 Grant, Lord, a richer blessing.

Grant us Thy Spirit in each heart,
 That fervent love reviving,
 Which concord, courage, zeal, imparts,
 That each may still be striving
 To make the great salvation known,
 And haste Thy blessed kingdom on
 Both in himself and others.

Oh joy, when once the reapers home
 Their golden sheaves are bringing,
 And all now waiting till Thou come
 Are in Thy presence singing.
 We wait for Thee, oh let Thy will
 Triumph in us, Thy members, till
 We into rest shall enter.

“BEHOLD, THE BRIDEGROOM COMETH.”

“UP, awake !” his summons hurried,
 The watcher shouts high on the turret,
 “Thy Lord, O Zion, comes to thee !”
 Through the midnight shadows falling,
 Hark ! clear and loud the voice is calling,
 “Ye prudent virgins, where are ye ?
 Rejoice, the Bridegroom’s near !
 Up, let your lamps shine clear.
 Halleluiah !
 Make no delay,
 In fair array
 Go forth to meet Him on the way !”

Zion hears the watchers singing,
 And up her heart for joy is springing,
 She stands and looks with wistful eyes.
 Lo ! He comes from heaven glorious !
 In mercy strong, in truth victorious,
 The morning star breaks through the skies.
 " Now come our joy and crown,
 Lord Jesus, to Thine own ! "

Hosanna !
 We enter all
 The joyous hall,
 And hold with Him the festival !

Glory be to Thee ascending,
 From tongues of men and angels blending
 With cymbals and the harp's clear tone !
 The city's pearly gates before us
 Stand open, and we join the chorus
 Of angels high before Thy throne.
 No eye hath seen the throng,
 No ear hath heard the song !

Oh the glory !
 There we shall be,
 And sing to Thee
 Praises everlasting !

NICOLAI.

" NOW ON THE HOLY GHOST WE CALL."

Now on the Holy Ghost we call,
 To give us the right faith first of all,
 That it may sustain us
 When faintness oppresses,
 And we go home out of life's distresses,
 Lord have mercy on us !

Our soul, sweet Light, do Thou shine upon
 Teach us to know Jesus Christ alone,
 That we may cleave to Him,

And by His good hand
 May be led safe to the heavenly land—
 Lord have mercy on us !

Thy grace, sweet Love, on our souls bestow,
 That they may feel Thy quickening glow,
 That we may love truly
 Each Christian brother,
 And dwell in unity one with another—
 Lord have mercy on us !

Thou who comfortest trembling faith,
 Help us to fear not shame or death,
 That we may despair not.
 Be grace infusing,
 When Satan stands our sins accusing—
 Lord have mercy on us !

LUTHER.

“SO WILL I ABIDE FOR EVER.”

So will I abide for ever
 In the Lord, and Thee obey ;
 Nothing me from Thee shall sever,
 I will walk in Thy good way.
 Life in life Thy grace infuses,
 To my soul gives power and spring,
 Like the vine its vital juices
 To the branches ministering.

Could I anywhere fare better,
 Than with Him who knows my case,
 Who for me, a hopeless debtor,
 Has ten thousand gifts of grace ?
 Where to me can hope be given,
 If it come not, Lord, from Thee !
 Unto whom, in earth and heaven,
 Power belongs eternally.

Where can I find friend so tender,
Who would do what Christ hath done ?
Who His precious blood did render
For my trespass to atone.
Should I not yield Him obedience
Who for me life freely gave,
And to Him swear true allegiance,
True allegiance to the grave ?

Yes in Thee, Lord, thus abiding,
I, come weal or woe, will be
Still abiding, still confiding,
Now and ever bound to Thee.
All my life on Thee relying,
I will wait Thy homeward call,
Since he best prepares for dying
Who in living makes Thee all.

Still abide with me when weary,
As my day draws near its end,
And when evening shades fall dreary,
And the glooms of night descend,
Then, Lord, lay Thy hands of blessing
On my drooping head, and say,
“ Child, thou goest, faith is pressing
On through death to life for aye ! ”

Then abide with me when verging
On the grave, a sudden dread
Chills me like the blast so searching
That precedes the dawning red.
When a mist steals o'er my vision,
Let Thy light more inward come—
So be mine a glad transition
Like a pilgrim's going home.

“TO GOD ALONE ON HIGH BE PRAISE.”

To God alone on high be praise
 And blessing for His favour ;
 No trouble that our foes can raise
 Can harm a man for ever.
 God shows us His goodwill, and peace
 He brings to us, which ne'er shall cease,
 The enmity is ended.

Thee, God the Father, we adore,
 Thy boundless mercy proving ;
 Thine is the glory, Thine the power,
 Thy throne remains unmoving :
 Thy might all measure doth transcend,
 Thy will must reach its certain end :
 Well may we praise and bless Thee !

O Christ ! the first-begotten Son,
 Who, full of grace and blessing,
 For our lost life did'st give Thine own,
 Our bitter woes redressing.
 O Lamb of God, to Thee we fly,
 In time of trembling hear our cry—
 Good Lord, have mercy on us.

O Holy Ghost ! who giv'st all good
 And wholesome consolation,
 May we, redeem'd by precious blood,
 Be shielded from temptation.
 For us He hung upon the tree,
 Do Thou from evil keep us free,
 Upon Thy grace relying.

DECUS.

“ALL THAT GOD DOES IS RIGHTLY DONE.”

ALL that God does is rightly done ;
 He will remain unerring ;

Him will I trust, and Him alone,
Whate'er He is preparing.
This God is mine,
He grace divine
Will send in needful measure :
I rest in His good pleasure.

All that God does is rightly done,
He never can deceive me ;
In the right path He leads me on,
So to His grace I leave me.

My spirit will
Be meek and still :
From ills that may me visit
His hand can good elicit.

All that God does is rightly done ;
His grace knows no repenting ;
His saving help in trouble shown,
The cup of health presenting.
He well can cure,
His word is sure,
On Him my hopes are founded,
I trust His love unbounded.

All that God does is rightly done,
And light and life receiving
From Him, the ever changeless One,
To Him I will be cleaving,
Come weal or woe,
For well I know
That time the trust will warrant,
And make His truth apparent.

All that God does is rightly done ;
The cup, if He infuse it,
Though sharp as gall the lips upon,
Shall I not freely choose it ?
Why should I shrink
That cup to drink,

Since comfort in it lieth,
And in it sorrow dieth.

All that God does is rightly done ;
On this my heart reposes ;
Though rough the path I yet may tread
Ere life's sad warfare closes,
My Father will
Uphold me still,
With grace in needful measure—
I rest in His good pleasure.

RODIGAST.

OUR REFUGE AND STRENGTH.

HE who the rule to God hath yielded,
And evermore on Him relies,
Will be in wondrous manner shielded
In straits and all adversities ;
Who in the Highest makes his stand,
Builds not his hope upon the sand.

What are our heavy cares availing ?
Why should we sigh our years away ?
What profit is there in bewailing
Our lot with each returning day ?
Such sorrow lends a sting to care,
And gives a heavier cross to bear.

Rest thou in God, amid all changes
Be pleased with all He may ordain ;
Wait patient till what He arranges
For thy best welfare shall be plain.
God, who has chosen us as His,
Knows best what our true welfare is.

He knows, if need be, how to measure
 Our hours of sunshine as of shade ;
 And when we wait on His good pleasure,
 With heart sincere and spirit stay'd,
 He comes more quickly than we know,
 And makes our cup to overflow.

Think not, when sorrow sharply trieth,
 That God hath left thee desolate ;
 That some one in His bosom lieth
 Who may be prosperous and great.
 The days to come bring changes on,
 And that which seems is quickly gone.

To Him whose arm sways wide creation,
 It is a light thing at His will
 To bring the great to lowly station,
 And make the lowly greater still.
 'Tis He whose wondrous ways we know,
 Who lifteth up and bringeth low.

Sing, pray, and onward still be pressing,
 To thine appointed work be true ;
 Trust Him, and tarry for His blessing,
 And it shall every day be new.
 Whoe'er on God his hope hath cast
 Will find Him faithful to the last.

NEUMARK.

“JESUS, LEAD THE WAY.”

JESUS, lead the way,
 So we shall not stray
 From the path while here abiding,
 But shall follow Thy safe-guiding.
 Lead us by the hand
 To the fatherland.

Should we fare but hard,
 Stand we fast on guard ;
 Though the days be very dreary,
 Never of our burden weary,
 For through trouble's sea
 Lies our road with Thee.

Should some secret smart
 Vex and wound the heart,
 Or another's woe and weakness,
 Grant us patience, grant us meekness.
 Lift Thou up our mind
 To the end design'd.

Lord, Thy guidance lend
 Through life to the end ;
 Though the way be rough and trying,
 Be Thou needful help supplying ;
 And when all is o'er,
 Open, Lord, Thy door !

ZINZENDORF.

BEARING THE CROSS.

THE heavier the cross, the nearer heaven,
 No cross without, no God within ;
 Death, judgment, from the heart are driven,
 Amidst the world's false glare and din.
 Oh happy he, with all his loss,
 Whom God hath set beneath the cross !

The heavier cross, the better Christian,
 This is the touchstone God applies ;
 How many a garden would lie wasting,
 Unwet by showers from weeping eyes !
 The gold by fire is purified ;
 The Christian is by trouble tried.

The heavier cross, the stronger faith;
The loaded palm strikes deeper root;
The vine juice sweetly issueth
When men have press'd the cluster'd fruit.
And courage grows where dangers come,
Like pearls beneath the salt sea foam.

The heavier cross, the heartier prayer ;
The bruised herbs most fragrant are.
If wind and sky were always fair,
The sailor would not watch the star;
And David's psalms had ne'er been sung,
If grief his heart had never wrung.

The heavier cross, the more aspiring ;
From vales we climb to mountain crest;
The pilgrim of the desert tiring,
Longs for the Canaan of his rest;
The dove has here no rest in sight,
And to the Ark she wings her flight.

The heavier cross, the easier dying,
Death is a friendlier face to see ;
To life's decay one bids defying—
From life's distress one then is free.
The cross sublimely lifts our faith
To Him who triumph'd over death.

Thou crucified ! the cross I carry,
The longer may it dearer be ;
And, lest I faint while here I tarry,
Implant Thou such a heart in me,
That faith, hope, love, may flourish there
Till for my cross the crown I wear !

SCHMOLK.

“NOW THE CRUCIBLE IS BREAKING.”

Now the crucible is breaking,
Faith its perfect seal is taking,
 Like the gold in furnace tried ;
Through the test of sharp distresses,
Those whom Heaven most richly blesses,
 For its joys are purified.

Trial when it weighs severely,
Stamps the Saviour's image clearly
 On the heart of all His friends :
In the frame His hands have moulded,
Is a future life unfolded,
 Through the suffering which He sends.

Suffering curbs our wayward passions,
Childlike tempers in us fashions,
 And our will to His subdues :
And His hand so soft and healing
Each disorder'd power and feeling
 By a blessed change renews.

Suffering keeps the thoughts compacted,
That the soul be not distracted
 By the world's beguiling art.
'Tis like some angelic warder,
Ever keeping sacred order
 In the chambers of the heart.

Suffering times the heart's emotion
To eternity's devotion,
 And awakes a fond desire
For the land where psalms are ringing,
And with psalms the martyr's singing
 Sweetly to the harper's choir.

Suffering gives our faith assurance,
Gives us patience in endurance,

Suffering, who is worth thy pains?
 Here they call thee only torment,
 There they call thee a preferment,
 Which not every one attains.

Brethren! grace which thus assuages
 Suffering, is through diverse stages
 Reach'd by true disciples here;
 While they're pierced by sharpest anguish,
 While in many a death they languish,
 Watch through many a night of fear.

Though in health with powers unwasted,
 And with willing hearts we hasted
 To take up our Saviour's cross;
 If through trial our God Master,
 Should refine these powers the faster,
 What good Christian counts it loss!

In the depth of its distresses,
 Each true heart the closer presses
 To his heart with ardent love;
 Ever longing, ever crying,
 Oh conform me to Thy dying,
 That I live with Thee above!

Sighs and tears at last are over,
 Breaking through its fleshly cover,
 Soars the soul to light away.
 Who, while here below, can measure
 That deep sea of heavenly pleasure,
 Spreading there so bright for aye!

Day by day, O Jesus, nearer
 Show that bliss to me, and clearer,
 Till my latest hour I see.
 Then, my weary striving ended,
 May my spirit be attended
 By bright angels home to Thee!

“O WORLD ! SEE THY LIFE LANGUISH.”

O WORLD ! see thy Life languish
 Upon the tree in anguish !
 Thy Saviour droops and dies !
 The Prince of Power with meekness
 Submits in mortal weakness
 To blows, and scorn, and flouting cries.

Draw near and see His bruises :
 The sweat of death suffuses
 The body of thy Lord.
 That noble heart is broken,
 And out of grief unspoken,
 Sigh after sigh is ceaseless pour'd.

Who this despite hath wrought Thee ?
 My Saviour ! who hath brought Thee
 Into such evil case ?
 Thee sin hath never tainted,
 Nor is Thy soul acquainted
 With ill, like us of fallen race.

I caused Thy grief and trembling,
My sins in sum resembling
 The sand-grains by the sea ;
 Thy soul with sorrow cumber'd,
 And raised those woes unnumber'd,
 Which press in dark array on Thee.

The pangs that rend Thy Spirit,
 I, for my deep demerit,
 Should suffer in Thy stead ;
 The fetters and the scourging,
 The tide of sorrow surging
 Round Thee, should break upon my head.

Man's surety, Thou did'st offer
 Thyself, and freely suffer

The bitter cross for me :
The crown of thorns Thou wearest,
The shame and scorn Thou bearest,
For guilt of mine thus patiently.

Each hour of life is showing
How all my good is owing
To this great love of Thine.
Each hour I would endeavour,
My soul and body ever
To Thy sweet service to resign.

A life so poor yields little
For such a high requital ;
But one thing will I do—
Till death my soul releases,
Thy dying, Thy distresses,
My heart will cherish deep and true.

Thy cross will stand before me,
Its sacred power be o'er me,
Wherever I may be :
A mirror whose reflection
Shows me all pure perfection—
A seal of love and constancy.

Fix'd on that cross of trial,
In constant self-denial
I unto sin will die.
If aught has Thee offended,
Though all the world command it,
I from that evil thing would fly.

Thy sighing and Thy groaning,
The tears and blood atoning,
Which Thou hast freely pour'd,
Through all life will comfort lend me,
And after death attend me
Into thine endless rest, O Lord !

GERHARD.

“BE CLOTHED WITH HUMILITY.”—1 PET. v. 5.

STILL downward goes Christ's way ;
 Wilt thou with fond endeavour,
 To scale heaven's lofty towers,
 Be vainly toiling ever ?
 Why haughtily aspire ?
 Thy Saviour stoopeth low ;
 He who with Him would rise,
 With Him must downward go.

Down, therefore, O my mind !
 Unlearn thy lofty thinking ;
 The light chaff mounts aloft
 While solid grain is sinking.
 Into the small deep spring
 The waters freely flow,
 Till it breaks forth a stream :
 So then, my mind, lie low.

Down, therefore, O mine eye ;
 God from His throne is looking
 With favour on the low,
 And lofty ones rebuking.
 The higher here the look,
 The nearer is the fall ;
 Therefore, mine eye, look down,
 And mark the end of all.

Down, therefore, O mine hand !
 Thy poor believing neighbour
 Is dear to Christ ; reach down
 And help him by thy labour.
 Grasp not into the air
 For glory and for fame ;
 Christ's hand the poorest helped
 Down, mine, and do the same.

Down, therefore, O mine heart !
Meek heart is dwelling lowly,
To Him who golden crowns
Hath promised to the holy.
In the vale of lowliness
The Spirit's blessing lies ;
Thither go down, my heart,
And seek it lowly-wise.

Thou, too, my body, down !
Dust in the dust be lying,
Till from thy low estate
Thou rise to life undying.
For glory—for the grave—
Thus, Lord, prepare me now ;
I long to rise as high,
I long to lie as low !

INGOLSTETTER.

ON THE DEATH OF HIS SON.

YES, thou art mine, still mine, my son,
Whoe'er may think thee lost for ever ;
But now thou art not mine alone,
Since He, of life the Lord and giver,
Who hath a stronger right than mine,
Hath called thee hence, and I resign
To Him my own, my darling boy,
The fulness of my earthly joy.

Ah, were the choice but given to me,
No earthly good, no earthly pleasure,
But willingly would I for thee
Give up, my heart's most cherish'd treasure.
“ Yes,” I would say, “ still near me stay,
Be thou my dwelling's light alway ;
And while love warms this heart of mine,
That love, my darling, will be thine.”

So speaks my heart, and means it well,
 But God, the Highest, means it better ;
 My love is more than tongue can tell,
 But in His heart is love still greater.
 I am a father, that alone,
 He of all fathers, Head and Crown,
 Fountain of Being whence have sprung
 All loves that link both old and young.

I long full sorely for my son—
 God but a while the gift was lending,
 And now He wills that near His throne
 He should abide in bliss unending.
 “ Alas ! my light is quench’d,” I say,
 He saith, “ Beloved ! come away,
 For ever here with me to dwell,
 And taste of joys unspeakable.”

O gracious word,—O sweet decree,—
 Holy beyond our dim foreseeing ;
 In God’s abode no ill can be,
 No sorrow of this mortal being.
 There come no sickness, want, or care,
 Sin casts not once its shadow there,
 And all God loves and watches o’er
 Are safe from evil evermore.

We parents are full oft oppress’d
 With cares about a child’s upbringing ;
 We work and plan, and take no rest,
 To one bright hope for ever clinging,
 To see them, through our pains and care,
 Settled in life with prospect fair ;
 Yet seldom things fall out as we
 In our fond dreams had hoped to see.

How many a youth that promised well,
 By the world’s breath is blighted wholly,
 And, yielding to the tempter’s spell,
 Soon turns aside to paths of folly.

And o'er him darkly gathers then
The frown of God, the scorn of men,
The father weeping tears of shame
For the lost child who blots his name.

Such evil chance can ne'er be his,
Safe in the dwelling of the Father,
He walks in that fair Paradise
Where Christ His happy saints doth gather.
There his is pleasure unexprest,
From every heartache he hath rest;
He sees the shining angel-band
Who here unseen around us stand.

He hears the song the angels sing,
And with the strain his voice is blending;
He drinks of wisdom from the spring,
He speaks of things all thought transcending—
Things none of us can see or know
While in this region dim and low,
Which strive how hard soe'er the mind
With all its searching cannot find.

Ah, if afar I could but stand,
And, for a moment, catch but faintly
Thy voice, my son, amid the band
Of worshippers white-robed and saintly—
Thy voice the Holy God adore,
Who makes thee holy evermore—
Methinks it would my heart so thrill,
That tears of joy mine eyes would fill.

I could but say, “There blest abide,
And I will cease this weak repining;”
My son, oh wert thou by my side!
Nay, hush, my heart! and come thou shining
Swift chariot of the prophet, come
And bear me upwards to the home
Where he and all the blessed dwell,
And speak of things too high to tell.

So let it be—God's will is best—
 I bow my head in meek submission ;
 Thou livest, and art truly blest,
 In glory's clear and open vision.
 In the glad sunshine of His smile
 Abide for ever—I the while
 Will, with our brethren, onwards fare,
 And, in God's time, rejoin thee there.

PAUL GERHARDT.

“NOW ALL GIVE THANKS TO GOD.”

Now all give thanks to God,
 Heart, hand, and voice combining,
 For everywhere His grace
 In wondrous deeds is shining.
 He from our mother's womb
 Our feeble steps hath led,
 And countless mercies shower'd
 Till now upon our head.
 Through all our life the Lord,
 Who is so rich in blessing,
 Will make us glad of heart,
 His perfect peace possessing.
 And keep us in His grace,
 Whatever trials come ;
 And out of all distress
 Will bring us safely home.
 Praise, honour, glory, be
 To Father, Son, and Spirit,
 The everlasting Three,
 Who equal power inherit.
 One only blessed God,
 One glorious Trinity,
 As from the first it was,
 Is, and shall ever be.

KINCKART.

FRIENDS IN HEAVEN.

LOVE over the departed
May freely shed the tear,
He need not be cold-hearted
Who is a Christian here.

Yet faith, cheer'd by the promise,
To heaven uplifts its eyes,
For those whom death takes from us
In glory shall arise.

So grace each trial blesses,
And gives the heart relief;
We prosper through distresses,
And can rejoice in grief.

How soothing, hope immortal !
How blessed Christ to have !
To see heaven's open portal
Beyond the open grave !

Lord Jesus, our Salvation !
In tears we praises give
For all the consolation
By which our spirits live.

The seed we sow to perish
Shall at Thy word spring up
In glory, so we cherish
A calm and joyous hope.

Lord, from this earthly ruin
A glorious frame restore,
Which will in heaven be viewing
Thy face for evermore !

HILLER.

“WATERFLOODS WILL I SEND RUSHING.”

“WATERFLOODS will I send rushing,”
 Saith the Lord, “through parched lands ;
 “Cooling wells shall yet be gushing
 “In the hot and desert sands ;
 “Where now thirsty wanderers roam
 “God’s fair garden yet shall bloom !”

Ah ! the drought is long abiding,
 And the land is cursed with blight ;
 Israel is still backsliding,
 And his strength is wither’d quite :
 Far the longing eye may seek,
 Scanty is the growth and weak.

Yet the faithful word once utter’d
 Will be gloriously fulfill’d ;
 Those whose seed in tears is scatter’d,
 Will be yet with gladness thrill’d,
 When from God the streams of grace
 Flood the near and distant place.

Courage, brethren, faint ye never,
 Out into the desert go,
 And reclaim by kind endeavour
 Those who lie in sin and woe.
 From the vale and mountains round
 Let the joyful summons sound !

Though it seem a fruitless journey--
 Labour seem to end in loss--
 Every way is rough and thorny
 In the kingdom of the cross.
 And for all who serve the King
 Fadeless wreaths are flourishing.

Listen to us, Lord, oh send us
 Thy good Spirit in His power,

Courage in the strife to lend us,
Perfect peace in trouble's hour.
Yes, on Thee our hope relies,
Zion's walls shall yet arise !

SOPHIE HERWIG.

“FRIEND OF SOULS, AND OUR SALVATION.”

FRIEND of souls, and our Salvation,
Jesus, Sun of Righteousness,
Walking where the congregation
Of the saints Thy name confess,
Come to us on Thee attending,
Let the Spirit's fire descending,
Pour the light and life of grace
Over this Thy holy place !

Come, and give our souls revival,
Thou, the Church's living Head,
In our hearts, without a rival,
Reign, and blessing freely shed :
Come, to our hearts clearly showing
God's own heart with love o'erflowing,
Let us feel the promise true,
“I am in the midst of you !”

Be each mind to Thee aspiring,
Brightness of Eternity !
Only loving and desiring
What Thy mercy offers free.
Let Thy light and life possess us,
With abundant goodness bless us,
And in gracious covenant bind
Fast to Thee each heart and mind

Lord, may all Thy message bearing
Look for light to Thee alone ;
And may all, that message hearing,
Feel Thy presence now made known.

Manifest to all Thy favour ;
 If our service do not savour,
 Lord, of Thee, it is in vain,
 Though it please the eyes of men.

Come, Lord, bring to each a blessing,
 Let each heart Thy dwelling be ;
 Be not one hereafter missing
 From Thy blessed family.
 Richly may we all inherit
 Gifts and graces of Thy Spirit ;
 Richly to Thy members shed
 Holy influence from their Head.

May all good Thy love bestoweth,
 Life and spirit, Lord, become ;
 May all joy the spirit knoweth
 Fit it for its heavenly home !
 Come, O Lord, Thy grace revealing,
 On each heart Thy favour sealing,
 So in love and truth shall we
 Evermore be knit to Thee.

HABEN.

“ O JERUSALEM ! FAIR DWELLING.”

O JERUSALEM ! fair dwelling,
 Where God’s praise is sounding high,
 And unnumber’d voices swelling,
 Holy, holy, holy ! cry.
 When shall I to the bright throng
 Of thy citizens belong ?

Here, amidst the tents of strangers,
 Must I strive and struggle still ;
 Where these saints once pass’d through dangers
 My appointed course fulfil ;

Where too oft my strength appears
Melting into feeble tears.

So the wish grows deeper, fonder,
Heavenly Friend ! Thy face to see,
In Thy Salem, shining yonder,
Where no tear nor sigh may be :
Where God's presence to the sight
Is unveil'd in clearest light.

Come, then, through this desert dreary,
Lead me, Jesus, by the hand :
Bring Thy pilgrim, worn and weary,
Home to his lov'd native land ;
Where the living fountain springs
That eternal solace brings.

Blessed land Thy saints inherit,
Full of beauty, full of bliss ;
Would that I had wings ! my spirit
Soon would leave a clime like this :
To that bright-wall'd city soar,
Which, as Sun, God shineth o'er.

But if I must longer tarry
On time's dark and angry sea,
Where the waves my vessel carry
On through tempest driving free,
Oh let hope my anchor prove—
Moving not when all things move !

This unshaken trust I cherish—
Christ, my help, is ever nigh ;
Bark of His can never perish,
Though the sea be wild and high.
Sail may rend and mast may break—
God will not His own forsake !

"IN THE ABYSS OF GLOOM AND MISERY."

In the abyss of gloom and misery,
 When far from Thee my dying spirit lay,
 Thy grace, God of my fathers, stoop'd to me,
 And through the darkness sent a cheering ray.

Thy voice in that dread silence struck my ear,
 And to my eyes, as if a mist had pass'd,
 The secrets of eternity were clear,—
 I had been dead, but now I lived at last.

Yet still my life, so languishing and low,
 Needs fresher, fuller quickening from above ;
 My faith, a flower that takes long time to blow,
 Hath at its heart more self-reproach than love.

The memories of the past cling to me yet,
 The phantoms haunt me of my wasted days,
 And while my glance turns inwards, I forget
 The God whose wondrous love I ought to praise.

Lord, if Thy greatness fills the soul with fear,
 Our love is what Thy loving heart desires :
 In hearts that love Thee is Thy kingdom here—
 Thy glory is the love Thy grace inspires.

Higher than swiftest thought can soar, Thy hand
 Hath arch'd the heavens and starr'd their spaces blue ;
 And were their lights extinguish'd, Thy command
 Could crowd the empty vaults with worlds anew.

Yet, void of power to know and love Thy sway,
 These heavens, and all the worlds that through them roll,
 Tried in the balance of Thy glory weigh
 Less than one sigh of love from one poor soul.

Spirit of Life, with this pure love inspire
 My longing spirit, as it upward turns ;

Kindle and nurse to strength the heavenly fire
Which in my penitence so feebly burns.

Let love the law to all my being give,
Love its continual aspiration be ;
To love, to love ! this is indeed to live ;
Thou God of love, oh breathe this life in me !

Unloving, man is unbelieving still,
With rebel foot he tramples on the laws
Of that Celestial City where Thy will
All loving souls to glad obedience draws.

VINET.

A B I D E I N H I M.

O ABIDE in Him, who for us
In His love to earth came down ;
Who, to ease us of our sorrow,
Countless sorrows made His own.
Cleave to Him ! when all things tremble,
He abides a rock of trust ;
He, though all in dust should crumble,
Stands victorious o'er the dust.

All things vanish ! hearts are breaking
Which you clung to fast before ;
And the lips that once were speaking
Words of comfort, speak no more.
And the arm that gave protection
Is no more your strength and shield ;
And the eye that look'd affection
Is in death for ever seal'd.

All things perish ! earth is hastening
In the earth to find its grave ;
And all worldly joys are wasting ;
Also wastes the heart, their slave.

Earthly form to dust must moulder,
 Earthly flames be quench'd in gloom,
 Earthly chains their links unsolder,
 Earthly flowers must lose their bloom :

Yet above the wreck of nature
 Stands the Lord, and calmly saith,
 "Lean on Me, thou trembling creature ;
 Cling to hope, and love, and faith !"
 There abide in Him, the abiding—
 Him who gives abiding bliss,
 Who writes all that trust His guiding
 In the Book of Life as His !

SPITTA.

"ON GOD AND ON NO EARTHLY TRUST."

On God and on no earthly trust
 Will I place my reliance ;
 He who has form'd me from the dust
 Deserves my heart's affiance.
 He by whose hand
 The world doth stand,
 Will still, whate'er betide me,
 As God and Father guide me.

Of things which yield true happiness
 God grants us all good measure—
 Health, riches, honour, and success,
 Are not the Spirit's treasure.
 Those who God's will
 Strive to fulfil,
 From a good conscience borrow
 An antidote to sorrow.

What is life's glory ? fast, how fast
 Its lustre death effaces.
 What is life's suffering ? quickly past,
 As little leaving traces.

Hope in the Lord,
He'll help afford,
Rejoice though foes assail you,
His help will never fail you !

GELLEBT.

“HE WHO TO DEATH MAINTAINETH.”

HE who to death maintaineth
His warfare will be bless'd,
But till the end he gaineth
He will be sorely press'd.
For foes will still assail him,
And troubles round him rise,
And faith must never fail him
Until he grasp the prize.

To go some little distance
And then to lose all heart,
Dismay'd to meet resistance,
Is but a coward's part.
Shame surely will reward him ;
But he who struggles on,
Has One to help and guard him
Until the end is won.

Strive, brethren, whate'er happens
Stand fast like soldiers good,
Never lay down your weapons
But wrestle unto blood.
If nothing us dishearten,
But fast for Christ we stand,
The victor's crown is certain,
Though death relax the hand.

To strive I am unable,
To Thee, Lord, I look up,
My promise is unstable,
Thine only gives me hope.

Hold up my head down falling,
 Confirm the feeble knee,
 At last my soul recalling,
 Say, " Glory waits for thee."

HILLER.

" JESUS SHALL THE WATCHWORD BE."

JESUS shall the watchword be
 For the year that is before us,
 Jesus' name the world shall see
 As the banner waving o'er us—
 Over all who Him obey,
 And are walking in His way.

Jesus' name and Jesus' grace,
 We in Zion are confessing,
 And whene'er we seek the place
 Where that name commands the blessing,
 There we shall His glory see,
 There the heart His temple be.

With that name upon our lips,
 We will go where'er He guide us ;
 With that star before our steps
 Nothing evil can betide us.
 Bright will be each hour and place
 With the sunshine of His grace.

Through that name our fiery pains
 Grow a purifying ordeal,
 And our bitterest cup contains,
 Through its power a wholesome cordial.
 Jesus' name is sun and shield,
 And will endless solace yield !

SCHMOLK.

"FROM PLACE TO PLACE THE CHRISTIAN GOES."

FROM place to place the Christian goes
By many a tempest driven,
At last the haven of repose
He safely finds in heaven.
God, after life's alarms,
Receives him in His arms.
He dies, as in the mould the grain,
To yield its golden fruit again.

And sure your parting has been bless'd
(Bless'd be your life's example !)
Thou spirit, calmly gone to rest,
And thou, its mouldering temple.
O soul, thy Saviour 's near !
The morning star shines clear ;
And you, ye members, softly sleep
Beneath love's shadow still and deep.

We wait with glad and patient hope
The glorious revelation,
While He this pilgrim dress folds up
In holy preservation.
Oh happy souls who rest
In Jesus' arms and breast.
Love leads us all our path aright,
Through such a depth to such a height.

ZINZENDORF.

THE LAST JUDGMENT.

THE world shall yet be cited,
By fires of judgment lighted,
Before the great white throne ;

Then a clear line shall sever
 The good and bad for ever,
 For Christ shall search and prove each one.

The shame in darkness lurking,
 The sting in conscience working,
 Red murder's secret hand ;
 The eye that roll'd in lewdness,
 The mouth that mock'd at goodness,
 The wicked heart in light shall stand.

The cries of souls sin-broken,
 The good man's deeds unspoken,
 Meek charity's kind hand ;
 Eyes wherein pure tears glisten,
 Lips whereto pure minds listen,—
 The Christian heart in light shall stand.

Where will men seek for cover,
 What veil their guilt draw over,—
 Who then a mask may wear ?
 Who trust in falsehood shameless ?
 Who boast of virtue blameless ?
 When, as they are, all stand forth there ?

Lord, let this solemn vision
 Be ever for monition
 Before my spirit clear ;
 That, through life's every winding,
 I may be chiefly minding
 How I in Thy pure sight appear.

HILLER.

WAITING FOR CHRIST.

WE wait for Thee, all glorious One !
 We look for Thine appearing,

We bear Thy name, and on the throne
We see Thy presence cheering.

Faith, even now,
Uplifts its brow
And sees the Lord descending,
And with Him bliss unending.

We wait for Thee, through days forlorn,

In patient self-denial,

We know that Thou our guilt hast borne

Upon Thy cross of trial,

And well may we

Submit with Thee,

To bear the cross and love it,

Until Thy hand remove it.

We wait for Thee, already Thou

Hast all our heart's submission,

And though the spirit sees Thee now,

We long for open vision ;

When ours shall be

Sweet rest with Thee,

And pure, unfading pleasure,

And life in endless measure.

We wait for Thee with certain hope,—

The time will soon be over ;

With child-like longing we look up

The glory to discover.

Oh bliss to share

Thy triumph there,

When home, with joy and singing,

The Lord His saints is bringing.

HILLER.

“ SLEEPING IN JESUS.”

THE Shepherd by His passion
Made peace and wrought salvation ;
To all in His good keeping
Now dying is but sleeping.

They go, not souls affrighted,
To judgment sternly cited ;
They go from hardships dreary,
To rest like soldiers weary.

No fears the heart molesting,
From all life's trouble resting,
They wait the glad revival,
And wait till its arrival.

They lay their toil-worn members
In death's cool quiet chambers,
And, free from care and cumber,
Like children sink to slumber.

Safe in God's love that found them,
With Christ's strong arm around them,
And seal'd by His good Spirit,
To die—why need they fear it ?

Thy grace, O Lord, doth teach me
No harm through death can reach me ;
So let mine eyes when closing
Be on Thy cross reposing ;

This heart to Thee be cleaving,
To its last beat believing ;
Then, till the resurrection,
Give my poor dust protection.

Glad then be mine awaking,
My lips in praises breaking,
My body clad with brightness
Like the spring lily's whiteness.

HILLER.

“ WHO ARE THOSE BEFORE GOD'S THRONE ? ”

WHO are those before God's throne,
What the countless gathering there ?
Every forehead wears a crown,
All like stars are shining fair ;
Halleluiah ! thus they sing,
With loud voices worshipping.

Who are those who palms so green
Wave like warriors marching home
From the field where they have seen
Foes for ever overcome ?
What the warfare, what the pain,
That so proud a triumph gain ?

Who are those in linen white—
Type of innocence—array'd,
Raiment pure and dazzling bright,
Robes which never more shall fade,
Never more shall know a stain,—
Whence hath come the glorious train ?

These are they who have fought well
For the honour of their God,—
Foil'd the world, and death, and hell,
Kept the rough and narrow road ;
And have thus through heavenly might,
Been victorious in the fight.

These are branches of the stem
Which salvation's fruit hath borne,—
These are followers of the Lamb

Who have pass'd through grief and scorn
 Now the cross no more they bear
 Now the festive dress they wear.

These are they who ever paid
 Priestly service to the Lord,
 Who upon the altar laid
 Soul and body at His word ;
 Now they stand the throne around
 Princes in His presence crown'd.

As the hart for waters cool
 Pants at noon tide in the chase,
 So they thirsted for the full,
 Ever-flowing springs of grace ;
 Now from thirst for ever free,
 For with Jesus Christ they be.

Thither I, too, lift mine eyes,
 Lord, my care on Thee I cast,
 Unto Thee my spirit cries
 While these days of warfare last ;
 Help me, make me at the close
 More than conqueror o'er my foes.

May my calling and my lot
 Be with those who serve Thee here ;
 That at length, my labours wrought,
 At Thy throne I may appear
 As Thy faithful servant, Lord,
 To receive Thy great reward.

Oh, what rapture shall be mine,
 When, with saints that sinless are,
 I in Thy pure light shall shine
 With the brightness of a star,
 Praise and glory, Lord, to Thee
 Singing through eternity !

EVENING HYMN.

THE moon up heaven is going,
The golden stars are glowing
 In skies serene and bright ;
The still woods lie in shadow,
And, dream-like, from the meadow
 The mist is creeping dim and white.

How hush'd is earth all over,
Beneath this dusky cover,
 How home-like in its peace ;
'Tis like some quiet chamber,
Where we lie down to slumber,
 And from our cares have sweet release.

The fair moon, yonder gliding,
Half of her orb is hiding,
 Yet she is round and bright ;
So in our earthly history
There is full many a mystery,
 Because we see not things aright.

We men, whom pride so raises,
Are men whom sin debases ;
 How little do we know !
Our cobweb fancies spinning,
Our endless schemes beginning,
 The wider from the mark we go !

Lord, show us Thy salvation,
That time's strange fascination
 Draw not our hearts from Thee ;
More guileless in endeavour,
O Father ! may we ever,
 Like children, glad and trustful be !

At last, life's sorrow ceasing,
To us be soft releasing,
 A gentle death be given :
And then a blest translation
To Thine own habitation
 Be ours, O Lord our God, in heaven !

So in God's holy keeping,
 Be all our brothers sleeping :
 Cool blows the evening breeze.
 No evil thing distress us,
 But quiet slumber bless us,
 And bring to sufferers healing ease !

CLAUDIUS.

"O SUN, IF FROM THY LIGHT A RAY."

O sun, if from thy light a ray
 Breaks through this prison-house of clay,
 How quickly doth all grief depart !
 How gladly soars to heaven my heart !

The tear of joy falls from mine eye,
 My look is lifted to the sky ;
 It seeketh Thee, it findeth Thee,
 And comfort in Thy face can see.

O Jesus, sweetest name and word !
 O Thou beloved and loving Lord !
 I nothing have but only Thee,
 And nothing wish but Thine to be.

O Friend, for whom my heart doth yearn !
 O star, to which mine eye doth turn !
 Shine forth, sweet light, serenely shine,
 And cheer this darksome soul of mine.

Ah ! that so long I careless proved,
 Ah ! that so late Thy ways I loved ;
 I little knew how good Thou art—
 How true and tender is Thy heart.

O well of grace ! spring up for me ;
 O Jesus, draw me close to Thee ;
 In trial show me love conceal'd,
 That richer blessing it may yield !

HENSEL.

“WILL NOT MY MEMORY TREASURE ?”

WILL not my memory treasure
Him who remembers me ?
Can I that love e'er measure
Which set my spirit free ?
I lay, no comfort knowing ;
He gave me life anew :
And love is ever flowing
Out of that heart so true.

Should I not love Him dearly,
Who, pitying my distress,
Through death reveals so clearly
Immortal blessedness ?
Who, when my strength is failing,
With outreach'd hand will come,
And on through foes assailing
Will lead me safely home.

A holy seal He gives me—
His body and His blood ;
He raises and revives me
With heavenly fortitude ;
His light of grace unveiling,
My heart He makes His throne
Let me, His presence hailing,
Rejoice in Him alone !

In days of grief and gladness
That Face is light to me,
That once in patient sadness
Was pale upon the tree.
My love, my life's endeavour,
And hopes, I yield to Thee ;
Oh open, Lord, for ever
Thy home, Thy heart, to me

PSALMS

PSALM I.

O BLEST is he who never walks
In counsels where the ungodly meet,
Nor in the way of sinners stands,
Nor sitteth in the scorner's seat.

The man who in Jehovah's law
Hath learn'd to place his whole delight,
And on His word of wisdom loves
To meditate both day and night,

He shall be like a tree that stands
Beside a stream of water clear ;
And in its season yields its fruit,
And keeps its foliage all the year.

All things shall prosper in his hand :
The ungodly have no root, no stay ;
Like chaff which from the threshing-floor
Before the wind is whirl'd away.

They shall not in the judgment stand,
No place among the blest is theirs :
The Lord, who loves the good man's way,
For him a joyful home prepares.

PSALM XIX.

THE heavens Thy glory, Lord, proclaim—

Thy handiwork the vault of light ;
Day tells to day its Maker's name,
And night repeats it unto night !

No distant clime, no savage speech,
But hears these mystic voices sound ;
Their line through all the earth doth reach,
Their witness to its farthest bound.

There hath the sun his cloudy tent,
Whence, bridegroom-like, he shows his face,
And glories in his strength unspent,
Like some swift runner in the race.

From heaven's bright limit he ascends,
And circling round the clear expanse,
On its blue verge his travel ends,
And nought eludes his fiery glance.

Thy law is perfect, and constrains
The spirit by its gracious sway ;
Thy testimony firm remains,
And guides the simple on the way.

Thy statutes, Lord, are right—a spring
Of holy joy within them lies ;
Clear are Thy precepts, gladdening
With light Divine long-darken'd eyes.

Thy fear, O God, is pure, and through
Eternal ages knows no change ;
The judgments of Thy mouth are true—
All righteous in their sovereign range.

More excellent than gold they are—
Gold in the furnace tested well—
To fainting spirits sweeter far
Than honey from the virgin cell.

In them Thy servant ever finds
Life's safest guide and surest guard,

And evermore, to simple minds,
In keeping them is great reward.

The mystery of the heart within
Who knows ? its wanderings who can rein ?
Cleanse me from secret thoughts of sin,
From bold ungodliness restrain.

Lord, let no sin my heart enthral,
No rival there dispute Thy claim,
Then conscience shall be clear, and all
Unbreathed upon by blame.

Each word my lips have said to Thee,
Each thought that from my heart hath flow'd,
In Thy pure sight accepted be,
My Rock and my Redeemer, God !

PSALM XX.

In the day when trouble's nigh,
May Jehovah hear thy cry ;
Be the name of Jacob's God
Thy defence and buckler broad ;
Out of Zion send thee grace,|
Succour from His holy place.

Let Him look with gracious eyes
On thy burning sacrifice,
Vows remember meekly made,
Gifts upon His altar laid,
Grant thee all thy heart's desire,
And thy secret thoughts inspire.

Very joyful, Lord, shall we
In Thy great salvation be ;
In the name of God, our stay,
We our banners will display.
Let Jehovah, ever nigh,
Listen to His servant's cry.

Now I know the Lord doth bring
Help to His anointed King,
Hears His cry in all distress,
From His heaven of holiness,
With His hand in danger's hour,
Quick to show its saving power.

Some may trust in arm of war,
Battle steed, or brazen car ;
Ours is in the Lord's right hand :
When they stumble, we can stand,
Rise erect when others fall,
Save, Lord, hear us when we call !

PSALM CXXVI.

WHEN God arose, the nation
From bondage to redeem,
The joy of our salvation
Came to us like a dream.
Our hearts with triumph bounded,
Our lips ran o'er with praise,
The heathen stood confounded
At God's mysterious ways.

They said the Lord hath wonders
Wrought for His captives sad ;
The Lord hath done great wonders,
And therefore we are glad.
Lord, all the remnant weary
Bring back to Zion still,
As brooks in south lands dreary
Their thirsty channels fill.

Full many cast in sadness
Their seed on parching soil,
Who yet shall reap in gladness
The harvest of their toil.

He who in tears departed
 With precious seed at morn,
 Shall homeward fare light-hearted
 With sheaves of golden corn.

PSALM CXXX.

OUT of the depths I sent a cry
 For help to Thee, O Lord, on high ;
 Listen, thou Holy One, and hear
 My pleadings with a gracious ear.

Wert thou our sins to set in light,
 Lord, who should stand before Thy sight ?
 But in Thy face shines mercy clear
 To fill the heart with holy fear.

I wait, I wait upon the Lord,
 My hope is settled on His word,
 To Him my longing eyes are drawn,
 More than the watcher's for the dawn.

O Israel, hope in God above,
 Rest, anxious heart, upon His love,
 With Him are mercies rich and free,
 From Him redemption flows to thee.

PSALM CXLVI.

PRAISE the Lord all creatures,
 Praise Him, oh my heart,
 In the glorious concert
 Take thy lowly part.
 Till my breath shall falter
 Life's last pulses beat,
 I will praise my Maker,
 Praise Him as is meet.

Put no trust in princes,
Lean not on a reed,
Seek not man for helper
In the hour of need.
Lo ! his breath departeth,
He returns to clay,
All his thoughts have perish'd
In one fleeting day.

Happy he whose helper
Is the mighty Lord,
He whose hope reposes
On Jehovah's word ;
Him who made the heavens,
Earth, and waters broad,
Who keeps truth for ever,
Jacob's covenant God.

He doth righteous judgment,
Pleads for the opprest,
Breaks the captive's fetters,
Succours the distrest ;
He lifts up the fainting,
Gives the blind their sight,
Loves with love unchanging,
All who love the right.

He befriends the friendless,
Feels the orphan's woe,
Cheers the lonely widow,
Lays the wicked low.
He shall reign for ever,
Ever be adored,
Praise thy God, O Zion,
Praise thy King and Lord

SELECTED BY HIS DESIRE

FROM

“THE EVENING HYMN,”

WHEN IN SWITZERLAND. 1864.

“OUT OF THE DEPTHS.”

THOU who didst on Calvary bleed,
Thou who dost for sinners plead,
Help me in my time of need,—
Jesus, hear my cry.

In my darkness and my grief,
With my heart of unbelief,
I who am of sinners chief,
Lift to Thee mine eye.

Foes without and fears within,
With no plea Thy grace to win,
But that Thou canst save from sin,
To Thy cross I fly.

Others, long in fetters bound,
There deliverance sought and found,
Heard the voice of mercy sound,
Surely so may I.

There on Thee I cast my care,
 There to Thee I raise my prayer ;
 Jesus, save me from despair,
 Save me, or I die.

When the storms of trial lower,
 When I feel temptation's power,
 In the last and darkest hour,
 Jesus, be Thou nigh.

ISRAEL'S KEEPER.

THOU who watch o'er Israel keepest,
 Shield us by Thy mighty power ;
 Thou who slumberest not nor sleepest,
 Watch us in the silent hour :
 Now and ever
 Be to us a rock and tower.

Praise to Thee, O Lord, we render,
 For Thy love in Jesus shown ;
 May that love, so strong and tender,
 Bind us fast to Him alone :
 Now and ever
 Gather us among Thine own.

By Thy Spirit's power renewing
 May our hearts be purified,
 And our wills to Thine subduing,
 May His grace control and guide.
 Now and ever
 In our hearts may He abide.

Visit us with Thy salvation,
 Guard us by Thy power Divine,
 Make our house Thy habitation,
 Make each heart Thy peaceful shrine :
 Now and ever
 Make us, Lord, and keep us Thine.

THE NIGHT IN GALILEE.

THE storm was loud, the ship was toss'd
 On dark Gennesareth,
 Their faith the twelve apostles lost,
 Then face to face with death.

But safe they were in their alarm,
 Upon that raging sea ;
 No angry wind nor wave could harm
 Those who were dear to Thee.

And ever in the darkest night,
 And in the wildest hour,
 Thy love, O Lord, can bring me light,
 Thy voice put forth its power.

Light, which in shining will impart
 A holy joy and peace ;
 Power, which can still the restless heart,
 And bid the tempest cease.

Why should this fluttering heart have fear,
 In darkness or in death—
 While Thou, my Saviour, still art near
 To help its trembling faith ?

Why doubt, as if Thou couldst deceive ?
 Why droop in hopeless grief
 While I can cry, “ Lord, I believe ;
 Oh help my unbelief ! ”

THE CHILD SAMUEL.

HUSH'D was the evening hymn,
 The temple courts were dark,
 The lamp was burning dim
 Before the sacred ark,
 When suddenly a voice Divine
 Rang through the silence of the shrine.

The old man, meek and mild—
 The priest of Israel—slept ;
 His watch the temple child—
 The little Levite—kept ;
 And what from Eli's sense was seal'd
 The Lord to Hannah's son reveal'd.

Oh give me Samuel's ear !
 The open ear, O Lord,
 Alive and quick to hear
 Each whisper of Thy word,
 Like him to answer at Thy call,
 And to obey Thee first of all.

Oh give me Samuel's heart !
 A lowly heart that waits
 Where in Thy house Thou art,
 Or watches at Thy gates
 By day and night—a heart that still
 Moves at the breathing of Thy will.

Oh give me Samuel's mind !
 A sweet unmurmuring faith,
 Obedient and resign'd
 To Thee in life and death ;
 That I may read with child-like eyes
 Truths that are hidden from the wise.

"NO NIGHT THERE."

DAY and night, with solemn greeting,
 Unto me are still repeating :
 " Life is wasting, time is fleeting,
 For the end prepare !
 Look beyond thy low condition,
 Upward to the great transition,
 To the land of open vision,
 Night comes never there ! "

May each night, while slowly falling,
 Be to me mine end recalling,
 Lift my mind from Time's enthralling
 And my spirit bear
 Thither where no sin distresses,
 Where no fear nor gloom oppresses,
 Where the soul God's glory blesses,
 For no night is there !

Lord ! my light and my salvation,
 Grant that in Thy habitation
 With Thy saints may be my station,
 In this bliss to share.
 Onward still my steps be tending,
 Upwards still my thoughts ascending,
 Till I reach Thy rest unending,
 Night comes never there !

THE STAR OF JACOB.

OVER woods and meadows,
 Hamlets near and far,
 Through the falling shadows
 Shines the evening star.
 First of all that cluster
 In the twilight blue,
 Trembling in its lustre
 Like a drop of dew.

Many glories mingle
 In that azure air,
 But to me still single
 Shines that planet there.
 For in its pure whiteness
 'Tis a type of Him,
 In whose holy brightness
 Sun and stars are dim.

So my mind it raises
 To my Lord above,
 Him whom heaven praises,
 Him whose name I love.
 Thou art first and fairest,
 Jesus, to Thine own;
 Worthily Thou wearest
 Heaven's golden crown.

Thou art high and holy,
 Angels worship Thee;
 Thou art meek and lowly,
 For Thou lovest me.
 Thou with light enlivening,
 Shining from afar,
 Art at once my evening
 And my morning star.

"STILL WITH THEE."

STILL with Thee, O my God,
 I would desire to be,
 By day, by night; at home, abroad,
 I would be still with Thee.

With Thee when dawn comes in
 And calls me back to care,
 Each day returning, to begin
 With Thee, my God, in prayer.

With Thee amid the crowd
 That throngs the busy mart,
 To hear Thy voice, where Time's is loud,
 Speak softly to my heart.

With Thee when day is done,
 And evening calms the mind,
 The setting as the rising sun
 With Thee my heart would find.

With Thee when darkness brings
 The signal of repose,
 Calm in the shadow of Thy wings
 Mine eyelids I would close.

With Thee, in Thee, by faith
 Abiding I would be ;
 By day, by night ; in life, in death,
 I would be still with Thee.

SPIRITUAL WORSHIP.

HARP and voice Thy praises telling,
 Rise, O Lord, Thy throne around,
 Yet Thou lovest every dwelling
 Where on earth Thy praises sound.
 He in whom heaven's glory centres,
 He from whom its gladness springs,
 Every tent of Jacob enters,
 And a blessing with Him brings.

In Thy praise our voices falter,
 Weak the prayers our hearts uplift,
 But we lay them on the altar
 That can hallow every gift.
 Fragrant from the golden censer
 May our praise and prayer ascend ;
 Prayer—to find a gracious answer,
 Praise—with angels' songs to blend.

Give us, Lord, in our devotion,
 Lips that burn with altar-fire ;
 Hearts that glow with that emotion
 Which Thy Spirit doth inspire ;
 Souls that are in words outpouring
 Longings which Thy grace hath given ;
 Hope rejoicing, faith adoring,
 Love aspiring unto heaven.

LIGHT IN DARKNESS.

Toss'd on temptation's angry tide,
 From my desirèd haven afar,
 Teach me, O Lord, my course to guide—
 Thy word my compass, Christ my star.
 On floods of many waters driven,
 By shores where shines no saving light,
 Teach me to keep my eye on heaven—
 Be Thou the landmark still in sight.

And as when day forsakes the sky,
 And earthly lights through vapours loom,
 Star after star shines out on high,
 The watch-lamps of the hours of gloom ;
 So still, as darker grows the hour,
 The brighter shines Thy Holy Word,
 And stars of promise, hid before,
 Their blessed light to me afford.

Still, as through darksome ways I go,
 My Father, be this guidance mine :
 Thy Word, the lamp my path to show,
 And Christ the light that makes it shine.
 Still bright before my lifted eye
 This fiery pillar onward move,
 Till Jordan flows behind, and I
 Shall reach the heavenly rest above.

IN THE NIGHT HIS SONG SHALL BE WITH ME.

In the night of my solitude kneeling alone,
 When friends may forsake me and comforts have flown,
 May I say, not alone, while I think upon Thee,
 My Father, in secret, Thy song be with me.

In the night of my sorrow, when troubles and fears
Gather round, and I water my couch with my tears,
May I say, not despairing, while resting on Thee,
My Father, in trial, Thy song be with me.

In the night of temptation, when perils assail,
And my strength in the struggle seems ready to fail,
May I say, not afraid, while I look unto Thee,
My Father, in danger, Thy song be with me.

In the night of my sickness, when sleepless I lie,
And restless and faint for the dawning I cry,
May I say, not cast down, while clinging to Thee,
My Father, in suffering, Thy song be with me.

In the night of desertion, when Thou seemest far—
In the waste not a well, in the sky not a star—
May I say, not forsaken, while waiting on Thee,
My Father, in darkness, Thy song be with me.

In the last night of life, when my journey shall end,
And in the dark valley the shadows descend,
May I say, not dismay'd, while I lean upon Thee,
My Father, in death, may Thy song be with me !

SERMONS.

S E R M O N S.

I.

“ The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want,” &c.—PSALM xxiii.

WE can imagine David, now upon the throne of Israel, looking back in this Psalm to the distant and peaceful days when he kept his father’s flocks in the valleys of Bethlehem. He would remember how little it then came into his thoughts, that he, who tended his few sheep in the wilderness, had such an eventful life and lofty destiny before him. He retraces, step by step, all the way by which he has been led, and sees the presence of that good and guiding hand in each, which took him from the sheepfolds, and from following the ewes, and brought him through a discipline of fiery trial, to feed Jacob, His people, and Israel, His inheritance. He looks forward into the dark and hidden future, and knowing Him in whom he has believed, is persuaded that He, who has been his God and Guardian through life, will be his “ guide even unto death ;” that His mercy and faithfulness shall not fail him nor forsake him till all his wanderings are ended, and till he, with all the sheep for whom the heavenly Shepherd died, is safely

folded on the banks of that crystal “river, the streams whereof make glad the city of God.”

The Psalm may be arranged into three several portions, the relation which God sustains to His redeemed people being the key to the sentiments expressed in each of them. There are—

I. The Psalmist’s confidence, founded on God’s faithfulness as the Shepherd.

II. His undoubting trust, founded on God’s constant presence as the Shepherd.

III. His joyful hope, founded on His *past* grace and tenderness as the Shepherd.

Before entering upon these we must look to that from which all his expressions of confidence spring, the relation in which God is represented as standing to His people.

“The Lord is my Shepherd.” Mark the fulness, the expansiveness of this idea. On the one side “the Lord,” the infinite, unchangeable, and everlasting God, all that is glorious, and holy, and wise, and self-sufficient, and much to be admired; on the other, “the Shepherd,” all that is tender, compassionate, and self-sacrificing, and much to be loved. These two characters—the one, all that is lofty in its magnificence; the other, all that is lowly in its condescension; the one, all glorious; the other, all gracious—are united. They are included and concentrated in the same large and loving heart, whose every pulsation sends the tide of life through the veins of His vast universe, but at the same time does not disdain to throb with strong and unwearyed regardfulness for me.

It is not as a Shepherd that David looks upon God, as if He sustained to him only the same necessary and general relation as that in which He stands to all the creatures He has

made. His mercies doubtless are “*over* all His works ;” but there are, not the less, rich and special mercies “*toward* them that fear Him.” The one, His general mercy, spans the world like the arch of the firmament, which encompasses without resting on it ; the other, His covenant blessings, are direct and pointed, like the rays of light which reach and fall upon it at every part of its surface. “*The Lord is my Shepherd*” is the language, not of nature but of grace ; and it is not until by faith we have recognised Him, not in creation, not in providence, but in redemption, and that a redemption which was wrought out for, and which has taken decisive effect on us, that we can look up with a glance of childlike confidence to God, and say, “*My Maker is my Father, my God is my Shepherd ; He who sitteth in the circle of the heavens has made for Himself an habitation in my heart, and the upholder of all the worlds is my best and nearest Friend.*”

It was in anticipation of the time when His Son was to take our likeness upon Him, and die for us men, and for our salvation, that God revealed Himself to the Old Testament saints as “*the Shepherd of Israel, leading Joseph like a flock.*” They rejoiced in the light that stretched toward them from the far-off day of Christ’s appearing. Of Him they read the sure words of prophecy, “*He shall feed His flock like a shepherd ; He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.*” We know how He, in one of the most touching of all His parables, applied this emblem to Himself, and this gave it its true significance and beauty. “*I am the good Shepherd, and know My sheep, and am known of mine.*” “*I am the good Shepherd ; the good Shepherd giveth His life for the*

sheep." Thus it is not till, by an appropriating faith, I, from a sense of my guilty, and miserable, and forlorn condition, as a sheep that has gone astray, have beheld the Saviour, who came after me into the wilderness, and God in Him, reconciling me to Himself, and opening the gates of His fold to me, that I can say with David's heart, "The Lord is *my* shepherd," and adopt as mine the language of this serene and happy confidence.

Having thus found the key to the sentiments he expresses, let us briefly pass them in review.

I. The Psalmist's confidence, grounded on God's faithfulness as the shepherd. "I shall not want," as if he had said, "He is faithful to the name and character He bears to me, and therefore He will not suffer me to want. I am a wretched and sinful creature, made up of wants and weaknesses, but He has brought me into His fold, He has taken on Himself all the charges of my salvation. He has that fulness of grace in Himself which makes Him able to supply all my need, and that fulness of loving-kindness towards me, which makes every needful blessing it comprises mine." If we would wish to say with David, "I shall not want," we must seek like Him to cherish the sense of our wants, whether these arise from our corruption as sinners, our helplessness as men, or our lamentable deficiencies as followers of Christ, and before whom this lofty and radiant mark is set,—perfection as God is perfect, purity as Christ is pure. We may be assured of this, that as we acquire a more perfect sense of our need, so shall we, with equal steps, attain to a more perfect understanding of God's great mystery of grace. For every deep and bottomless want in us that opens to the spiritual

eye, there opens at the same time over against it, a chamber in the treasure-house of God's all-sufficiency, which contains, in divine profusion, all that can satisfy and fill it up. In proportion as we see inwards we see outwards, and he who has sounded most profoundly the depths of his spiritual necessities, is he who has been farthest, and prospered most in finding out that exhaustless perfection of the Godhead, from whose replenishment all that is holy, and excellent, and God-like in man must be supplied. But, that our thoughts may flow in a narrower channel, let us follow the direct course of the Psalmist's meditations.

What is it for which the sheep chiefly depend upon the shepherd? These four things,—sustenance, refreshment, restoration, and guidance.

1. I shall not want *sustenance*, for “He maketh me to lie down in green pastures.” Here David draws from the remembrance of his pastoral life, when from some tufted knoll in the wilderness, his eye had ranged the valleys that be among the hills, or along the winding course of some murmuring rivulet, for some green and flourishing spot to which he might guide the flocks of Jesse. So God has made rich and plentiful provision, in His word and ordinances, for the nourishment of the sheep of His pasture. There they can “lie down,” not pass through in haste as if they had only the hope of some scanty and precarious sustenance, but resting in the calm and assured confidence, that there He has abundantly blessed the provision of Zion, and will satisfy her poor with bread. There Israel may “dwell in safety alone ; the fountain of Jacob is upon a land of corn and wine.” This is the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free. “I am the door, by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall *go in and out*

and find pasture." There is the freedom in the prospect of an ample range, and peace in the persuasion that there is no want to them that fear Him. "I will feed them in a good pasture, and upon the high mountains of Israel shall their fold be: there shall they lie in a good fold, and in a fat pasture shall they feed upon the mountains of Israel.

2. I shall not want *refreshment*, for, "He leadeth me beside the still waters." There is thus not only needful sustenance, but refreshing consolation provided for all who are under the good Shepherd's care. We know how often in Scripture the emblem of water, as a purifying and refreshing element, is employed to represent the gracious operations of the Holy Spirit. "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink this spake He of the Spirit." This is the "pure river of the water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb." When the Spirit receives of the things of Christ and shows them to the believer, longing to behold His power, His glory, and His beauty, or discovers to him his interest in the hopes and promises of His Word, witnessing with his spirit that he is a child of God, he is strengthened and revived as by a draught from "that well of water which springeth up unto everlasting life." To be "led beside the still waters," is to be "walking in the comfort of the Holy Ghost," to be enjoying holy and tranquil communion with Him, to have clear and enlarged and soul-satisfying discoveries of Christ and His work, to have the love of God shed abroad in our hearts, so that even amid outward tribulation we have inward peace. It is He who opens up "the wells of salvation" out of which the believer draws water with joy. Though often "in a dry and thirsty land where no water is," let him follow the leadings of his

Shepherd, and the promise will be fulfilled, “When the poor and the needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Jacob will not forsake them. I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys. I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry lands springs of water.” “This is the rest where-with He has caused the weary to rest, and this is the refreshing” which comes down on the fainting soul “as the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended on the mountains of Zion.”

3. I shall not want *restoration*, for “He restoreth my soul.” It is necessary that the Shepherd should be so interested in the sheep, that when one wanders from the fold, and is in danger of perishing in the wilderness, He should leave all, and go after it, and never rest until He find it. So says the Psalmist, “He restoreth my soul.” For there is even in those who have passed under the rod of the good Shepherd a native tendency to backsliding. There is the vexing remnant of an evil heart of unbelief, which by a subtle influence brings about a departure from the living God. It is distressing that such should be the case, but so it is, and here is the remedy provided. He will not cast off the wanderer who has strayed from the fold. He who went after him at the first, will go forth upon his devious track again, true to His character as the “Shepherd and Bishop of souls.” He will make His entreating voice be heard in the silence of the wilderness, where they “wander in a solitary way.” “Return unto me, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings.” And hearing it they are filled with shame and sorrow, yet have heart to say, “Unto whom shall we go but unto Thee?” “Turn Thou

us, and we shall be turned, for Thou art the Lord our God." "For thus saith the Lord God, Behold I, even I, will both search my sheep and seek them out. As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered ; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick. I will feed them with judgment."

The promise of restoration implies *correction* when it is needed. They will be restored in the spirit of meekness, but at the same time their sin will be purged away in the spirit of judgment. "If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments ; if they break my statutes and keep not my commandments ; then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless my loving-kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail."

4. I shall not want *guidance*, for "He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake." This, indeed, is the end of all God's dealings with His people as their shepherd,—not that they should be led in the paths of pleasure or ease, but "in the paths of righteousness ;" in those ways which mark, by the degree of their advancement in them, the measure of their progress in conformity to His image, and which end in the perfect manifestation of that image in their souls. The paths of righteousness are often rough and rugged paths. The footsteps of the flock are often, perhaps oftenest, on the painful ways of trial and sorrow, but the good "Shepherd goes before them, and the

sheep follow Him, for they know His voice." His presence and blessing can convert the hardest path of humiliation into a fenced and genial way of quietness and safety. Unless it is our desire to be led in the paths of righteousness, we cannot lie down in green pastures, or beside the still waters, where He maketh the flock to rest at noon. The roughest ways are those where the richest pastures and the most refreshing waters are. "The work of righteousness shall be peace ; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever." It is because the ways of wisdom are ways of righteousness, that all her ways are pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. Those who make pleasure their chief end often fail in finding it ; those who make righteousness their chief end find pleasure by the way. Men sever them, God unites them. There is a *present* blessedness in resigning ourselves to His direction, ready to follow wherever He may lead. I *will* instruct thee and teach thee *in* the way which thou shalt go ; I will guide thee with mine eye." This He has engaged to do for "His name's sake." His glory is concerned in the safe guidance of His people : all the perfections of His character are pledged that He will guide them with His counsel, and afterward receive them to His glory. "Though the Lord give you the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction, yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers, and thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left."

II. There is an expression of the Psalmist's undoubting trust, founded on God's constant presence with him as the

“ Shepherd.” “ Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil ; for Thou art with me ; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me.” This is generally and very properly understood, as referring to the close of the believer’s pilgrimage, and his passage through the darkness of that mysterious journey which is terrible to nature, because it is unknown. But we see no reason why it should be limited to this, why it should not be considered applicable to seasons in his experience, when, losing the sense of God’s presence with him, with guilt upon his conscience, and apparently abandoned to the assaults of his spiritual enemies, it may be said that “ the sorrows of death compass him, and the pains of hell get hold upon him.” It is worthy of remark that the author of that immortal allegory, the Pilgrim’s Progress, whose knowledge of Scripture and of experimental Christianity was equally profound, represents the Christian as passing through the valley long before he died,—“ A land of darkness as darkness itself ; and of the shadow of death, and without any order, and where the light is as darkness.” There are times when, involved in spiritual gloom and perplexity, the only language that can express the desolation of his heart is that of the afflicted patriarch : “ O that I knew where I might find Him ! that I might come even to His seat !” “ O that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me ; when His candle shined upon my head, and when by His light I walked through darkness.” Yet even then, as if he were hoping against hope, he is to endeavour to say, “ Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.” “ Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy, when I fall I shall arise ; when I sit in darkness the Lord shall be a light unto me. I will bear the

indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against Him, until He plead my cause and execute judgment for me ; He will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold His righteousness.”

But there is no doubt that the Psalmist’s words admit of a special application to the closing scene of the believer’s life on earth, that period into which so many trials are crowded, which he not unfrequently anticipates with painful anxiety, and through fear of which some are all their lifetime subject to bondage. One thought that often haunts and disquiets them in the prospect of death presents itself, in plausible shape, as follows :—We have often fainted under the pressure of less formidable trials, how shall we preserve our confidence in the hour when heart and flesh faileth ? “ If we have run with the footmen and they have wearied us, then how can we contend with horses ; and if, in the land of peace, wherein we trusted, they wearied us, then how shall we do in the swellings of Jordan ? ” In answer to such vexing thoughts as these, we have simply to look to the source of David’s confidence in anticipation of the same trying hour : “ I will fear no evil, for Thou *art* with me.” He does not say, Thou *shalt be* with me ; it is the thought that God is ever with him, the same faithful, tender, unchanging God and Saviour, that makes him rejoice in the assurance that he will have the same arm to lean on, and the same voice to cheer him *then*, as through the wilderness of life. The realising sense of God’s presence dissipates the mists that hang or float over the gloomy valley, and discovers to the trustful believer the apparition of an angel of light beneath the mask that is upon the face of the king of terrors. Has not God said, the Rock of Israel spoken to him, “ As thy day, so

shall thy strength be." He will fear no evil. What evil has he to fear in the place where he encounters nothing but "the shadow of death?" His Redeemer has taken away the substance of his power, and the sharpness of his sting. He sees Death sitting on a shadowy and unreal throne, wielding a pointless weapon, and wearing only "the likeness of a kingly crown." He can look upon his face without trembling, saying, "I know that my Redeemer liveth." "O death, where is thy sting?" He can walk through his cloudy realm in the length of it, and in the breadth of it, without fear; for the Almighty Shepherd goes before him on the way, with a "rod" to defend him against all his enemies, the rod of His strength and protection, and with a "staff" to support his sinking steps, the staff of His word and promise. The weakest believer has greater encouragement than David had, to stay himself upon the promise of the divine presence in that hour of darkness. His Saviour in his nature has encountered all its terrors. He has searched the dark valley through and through; He knows all its secrets and all its windings. He likewise knows the frame and frailty of all who pass through it, and remembers that they are "dust," though He is bringing them to glory. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints." "Death" has no power to separate one of them from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus their Lord. Where God is, where their Saviour is, no evil can befall them; and if they but cast themselves on His care, He will bear them up, His presence shall go with them, and He will give them rest. When we lose the sense of God's presence, the slightest discouragement may appal and overwhelm us: when we go on in the strength of it, the most terrible of

trials has no power to daunt or disquiet us. David, in a moment of despondency, once said, “I shall one day perish by the hand of Saul.” But let him look to God, and he can gaze without fear on the uplifted arm of the king of terrors. When the three young men were thrown bound into the burning fiery furnace, the king saw them walking loose with a companion in the midst of the flames. “The form of the fourth is like the Son of God,” and because “He was with them” the fire had no power upon their bodies, neither had the smell of fire passed on them. Is not the promise of His presence made expressly to all His people, “Thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and He that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not : for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee ; and through the floods, they shall not overflow thee : when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned ; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour.”

III. We are now to consider the Psalmist’s hope, founded on God’s *past* grace and tenderness as the Shepherd, (ver. 5, 6.) “Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies.” He had often been reduced to the greatest straits, and his adversaries had made his confidence in God the subject of their taunts, but that trust had never been misplaced. Heavenly provision had been prepared for him by an invisible hand. He seemed to sit at a sumptuous table, in a royal banqueting-house, while those who hated him looked on and were ashamed.

All who have been led in “the paths of righteousness,” if they would consider God’s dealings with their souls, would discern abundant cause to make the same acknowledgment. Have there not been seasons in which, when they most dreaded being left to the power of their enemies, their strength in waiting upon the Lord has been suddenly restored? As if they had eaten of angels’ food, their sinking hearts have been revived. They have been enabled to withstand in the evil day, and to advance with hopefulness and joy on their way to Zion. “By this I know,” they have said, “that Thou favourest me, because mine enemy doth not triumph over me.”

All the refreshments of His Spirit, the comfort of His presence, the promises of His word, are the rich and varied provision spread for the satisfying of their spiritual wants. “Thy plants are an orchard of pomegranates, with pleasant fruits; camphire, with spikenard, spikenard and saffron; calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense; myrrh and aloes, with all the chief spices: a fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon.” It is often in the wilderness of trial into which God has led the believer, that vineyards are given him, and “the valley of Achor for a door of hope.” There are palm-trees as in Elim under which he may sit, and fountains as in Marah, which may at first be bitter to the taste, but by the healing leaves of the tree which God points out, afford refreshment, and spring up into everlasting life. To grasp at comfort by seeking to have affliction removed, may be to lose it all altogether, to pluck up by the roots the tree whereon cluster the peaceable fruits of righteousness. To seek that it may not be

removed till it is fully sanctified, is to find comfort and peace in its continuance.

Satan's table is spread with fruits that are blooming to the eye, "but turn to ashes on the lips;" God's with many that seem rough and prickly, but contain the sweetest and most nourishing kernels.

But not only does God afford His people all that is needful, He blesses them with much that is liberal and exhilarating. "Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over." This is an allusion to an eastern custom, the common expression of festive gladness and enjoyment, the pouring of fragrant oil, or sprinkling of rich perfumes, by the master of the feast, upon his guests. In Scripture this is employed as an emblem of the gracious influences of the Holy Spirit. "Ye have an unction from the Holy One." "The anointing which ye have received from Him abideth in you." It is not only that there is the hope of a *future* salvation possessed by the believer, but the joy of a *present* salvation begun even now,—not only the "earnest of the Spirit," as the evidence that the inheritance is purchased, but the purifying presence of the Spirit consciously preparing him for its sacred delights and occupations. Christ is said to have been "anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows," but all His fellows, every man in His own order, are partakers of it. "By one Spirit they are all baptized into one body, and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."

There is even now, through the reviving virtue of the "oil of gladness" a joy in believing "with which the stranger may not intermeddle," a peace which passeth all understanding, and which can make the face to shine by

reflecting the inward serenity and brightness of the heart in the mild, and gracious, and attractive light upon the countenance. "He which hath anointed us is God," and as the Spirit is the chiefest of the gifts the Saviour has received for men, let us ask of Him, and He will shed it forth on us abundantly. David adds, "My cup runneth over," to express the affluence and profusion with which blessings had been showered upon him. It was not only a full but overflowing cup that was put into his hands, no measured and stinted supply of blessing, but abundant and, so to speak, superfluous. Everything in God's house is on a princely scale of magnificence. There is bread enough, and to spare, there is wine poured forth and running over. The invitation is, "Eat, O friends, and drink, yea drink abundantly, O beloved." It is with a royal generosity and large-heartedness that He bestows His gifts. All these "as a King He giveth." "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with *all spiritual blessings in Christ.*" We are not straitened in Him. "Have I been a wilderness to Israel?" The Father giveth not the Spirit by measure to the Son; and only according to the measure of our desires does the Son give Him to us. The only reason that we have to complain, not only that our cup does not run over, but that it is not filled, is that we dishonour God by our doubts of His liberality, by our cold, unworthy, suspicious prayers. Is it not written that "in Christ all things are ours?" and what should hinder us but an evil heart of unbelief from saying, "My God shall supply all my need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus?"

The experience of God's past grace and faithfulness leads the Psalmist to look forward confidently to the future.

“Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life.” He speaks as if it would be sinful to doubt it. After praising Him for all that is past, what can he do but simply trust Him for all that is to come? This, then, is the blessed certainty he contemplates through the vista of his remaining years. It is this which casts a brightness over the prospect, not that greatness, and honour, and wealth will be his, but that goodness and mercy will *surely* follow him, goodness to bless all his trials, mercy to pardon all his sins.

These are often following the believer when he does not see them. They are behind him on ways of trial where he seems to walk alone in darkness. But ever and anon, like ministering angels, they come up and greet him, and even though he should not discern their presence on every path, he may be assured that he will at length see the prints of their footsteps beside his own, over all the way by which he has journeyed to the city of habitation. He is now to trust God where he cannot trace Him. He is to be “confident of this very thing that He who hath begun a good work in him will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ,” that “the Lord shall deliver him from every evil work, and preserve him unto His heavenly kingdom.”

But the range of David’s spiritual vision is not bounded by the life that now is. Earthly prospects are terminated by the grave, but his pierces through its darkness, and aspires beyond its power. “Thou wilt guide me by Thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory.” What a radiant “afterward” expands before his eye! “I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.” We know how he loved and longed for the earthly sanctuary. “One thing have I desired, that will I seek after, that

I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life." "One day in Thy courts is better than a thousand." But now he longs for more open vision, for more uninterrupted communion with God, and in the language of triumphant assurance he expresses his confidence that his eternal dwelling-place will be the heavenly sanctuary. This is the advantage to the believer of frequently reviewing the dealings of God with his soul. From the recollection of past mercy, he rises, step by step, to the joyful anticipation of future blessedness. If he has ever felt that the Lord is *his* Shepherd, that God in Christ is *his* reconciled God, that Jesus is to him the chiefest among ten thousand, and altogether lovely ; that his wants have been supplied, and his trials blessed, his soul restored in backsliding, his feet guided in the paths of righteousness, and his spirit refreshed and strengthened by communion with the Saviour whom he loves—he is warranted to take encouragement from this, and to rejoice in the hope that an abundant entrance will be ministered to him into the kingdom and the glory of his Lord. Whom He hath loved He loveth to the end. "They shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of His hand." They will at last see Him, whom having not seen they love, and there will be no cloud to darken, no fear to disquiet, no temptation to annoy, no sin to defile and separate between them and their God. "Their dwelling shall be on high ; their place of defence the munitions of rocks ; bread shall be given them, their water shall be sure." "Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty : they shall behold the land that is very far off." They "shall go no more out," "there shall be no night there," for "the Lord shall be their everlasting light, and the days of their mourning shall be ended." "They shall

hunger no more, neither thirst any more ; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them to living fountains of waters ; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

" This honour have all His saints."

II.

“ And it came to pass the day after, that he went into a city called Nain ; and many of his disciples went with him, and much people. Now, when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her. And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not. And he came and touched the bier : and they that bare him stood still. And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise. And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother. And there came a fear on all : and they glorified God, saying, That a great prophet is risen up among us ; and, That God hath visited his people. And this rumour of him went forth throughout all Judea, and throughout all the region round about.”—LUKE vii. 11-17.

THE time at which our Lord performed this miracle has been particularly remarked by the Evangelist, “ the day after,” the next day after the cure He had wrought on the centurion’s servant. He did not linger in that city, for He had not come to receive honour from men. He hastened from it before the tidings could have had time to circulate, before the people could gather round Him with their praises. He had His eye ever upon the cross, and it cast everything earthly into shadow. The thought that men would try to make that a path of glory which He had chosen to be a path of thorns seems to have been most

painful to His holy soul. Thus He went silently out of the astonished city, as when He heard that the multitude were coming to Him with the crown of Israel He departed into a mountain Himself alone. This town of Nain, of which all we know is that this mighty work was done there, lay about twelve miles from Capernaum, near the southern extremity of the Sea of Galilee, and not far from Endor, so memorable in the record of the closing days of Saul. It was doubtless this work of mercy that now attracted the steps of our Saviour towards this obscure Galilean town. He knew what had happened there, what heavy affliction had saddened one of its lowliest dwellings. There was that within Him which told Him, when "beyond Jordan," the very moment that Lazarus died; and the flight of this solitary soul into eternity, which every hour is gathering into itself so many immortal spirits, had not passed unnoticed by Him who had determined in its case to make Death quit its hold upon its prey. To visit the widow in her affliction, to restore comfort to a sorrowful mother in Israel, that was enough for Him. "He must needs go to Nain." "He must needs go through Samaria," in a higher sense than the necessities of an earthly journey, when He knows that one poor woman will be found by Him at Jacob's well, whom He will bring back to the fold. Who that can fathom the depths of that love that filled and ever kept full the human heart of Christ with compassion for the poor and the perishing?—those streams of mercy and blessing that went forth in health and salvation wherever He walked on this earth, even as the overflow of a fountain that is ever gushing forth and ever replenishing itself from springs that lie deep out of sight of man? He went about suffering evil and doing good.

On this occasion “many of His disciples went with Him, and much people.” He would not court the multitude to follow Him, neither would He affect to repel them. He would not crush one of the instincts of the nature He had formed, and one of the strongest led the people to follow this great Prophet, who marked His course with miracles, and left living monuments on which He graved His name with awe and solemnity on their minds. Besides He is about to perform one of His mightiest works ; let witnesses be multiplied, not to sound His praises, but, if they can, to detect the imposture, if they cannot, to silence those who would call it such. These things were not done in a corner, they were done in the face of heaven, under as quick-sighted and jealous eyes as the unbelief of the nineteenth century could supply. So when He is to rise from the dead, let the mouth of the sepulchre be blocked up, let the stone be sealed, let a guard be posted, let every one do everything to expose the fraud, if there is any, and cover it with shame ; but if there is none, serve to do everything to reflect greater lustre upon the miracle achieved in spite of you. Let all follow Me who choose, let all Galilee which lieth around turn its eyes, let the Sadducees stand on this side, and the Pharisees on that, set the double watch of unbelief and bigotry upon this dead man’s bier : I know what I can do. Power works as strongly in My hand as pity in My heart, and before all Judea shall I send him back a living man from the throat of the sepulchre. So our Lord went on along towards Nain. “Now when He came nigh unto the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow, and much people of the city was with her.” What a volume of

Human life and sorrow is brought out in these simple words! What an ever fulfilling record of mortality is this! Out from the city, perished in his prime, with the traces of his youthful manhood not yet faded from him, they are bearing a man. A few days ago he walked among them, but here he is stretched out upon his bier, all the stir and tumult of life hushed for him, his work in the world done, all its ties broken and its hopes dissipated, for the last time in the midst of those who loved him, but only to be buried out of their sight. It was the first spectacle that met our Lord's eye as He came towards the gate, the first sign that life was in it, a company of the living coming from it, and Death in the midst of them. What a commentary on life is this! For this was no strange thing that was passing ; it had been done the day before, and it would be done the day after, and it had been going on for centuries then, and so it has been for centuries since in the whole circuit of the world. And would you this day take your stand near the gate of any of its cities, the same spectacle would strike your eye, the living would be seen coming forth from it with the dead man going to his long home, and the mourners going about the streets. Such are the desolations which sin hath made in the earth, such the widespread memorials of the reign of death. Go where you will in the world, you will not cross the boundary of that dominion, that ghastly ensign will meet you in the sheltered and crowded haunts of life. Over all earth's lands and through all life's seasons you will see that portentous shadow hovering. Where the ranks of life are thickest you will see Him piling up His highest trophies, and the only explanation of all this is given in those mournful words : " By one man sin entered into the

world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Wherever life extends, there death extends, unfolding his gloomy banner like the scroll of the prophet, in which there was written, lamentation, and mourning, and woe.

In this particular instance there was much to aggravate the bitterness of a parting, always painful, come how it may. And we know nothing more touching in its graceful simplicity, no picture of sorrow more delicately yet more truly handled, with a few artless strokes, than that which the evangelist has portrayed in these few words: "A dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow." She, according to the custom of the Jews, is following the body of her son to the grave, and amidst the throng of mourners the Saviour's eye rested on that afflicted and forsaken one,—less obtrusive in the agony of her grief. She had already endured one of the heaviest calamities of life in the stroke which had deprived her of him who should have cherished and protected her, the husband of her youth, who she hoped would have been the companion of her pilgrimage to its latest stages, and perhaps survived to lay her gray hairs in the dust. The severity of this trial would not have been felt by her so keenly as long as one was left to perpetuate the name of him who had departed. This thought had been a source of consolation to her in her darkest hour of sorrow. She had seen him grow up to manhood; she had begun to rejoice in him as the stay and solace of her declining years. The thought of death loses half its bitterness when she thinks that his hand will close her dying eyes, and that in him her memorial will not perish, when suddenly her heart is pierced with a keener anguish than before, for Death

has once more entered her dwelling, and bears away from her bosom the last remaining alleviation of home. And now she is following him, who should have followed her to the grave, with that bitterness of the heart which it only knoweth. That grief is working in her soul which the Scripture represents as the strongest we can feel. When it would shadow forth the anguish of spiritual mourning, it is said, “They shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him as one that is in bitterness for his first-born.” “Much people of the city was with her,” for at such a time the hardest heart would be melted into sympathy with such grief as hers. It was well that they were there. There were some among them who had seen the dead man sicken, who had watched his deathbed, who had seen him die, and had composed the lifeless limbs, who had laid out the body on the bier,—they will be the most faithful witnesses to that power that is about to call him back to life.

“When the Lord saw her he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not. And He came and touched the bier.” He had time to grieve with her, before He would make her widow’s heart to sing for joy. The ample recompense for all her tears that He is preparing will not make His sympathy with the heavy-laden mourner less tender or less keen. He will now say to her, “Weep not,” though they must have fallen like cold unmeaning words upon her ear. What a blessed assurance for all that mourn in Zion: “We have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with a feeling of our infirmities ; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.”

The body lay loosely on an open bier, such as are in common use here among the poorer class of people, from

this ready to be removed without covering, except its shroud, into a vault in the rock, that had been hewn out for a sepulchre. Our Lord advanced and touched the bier, and with a majesty in His action that showed the stirrings of divinity within Him. Then came a silence over the wail of the loud mourners, a momentary murmur passes through the crowd, and they that bear him stand still. It was a loud alarm at the gate of Satan's kingdom, that the spell by which he had bound the world was dissolved. It was a handwriting on the wall of Satan's palace. It was a meeting at which the universe might have stood still, creation groaning and travailing in pain might have ceased its wail,—He the living man by that dead man's bier,—at that action silence might have come over heaven and hell. It is a challenge of mutual defiance boldly struck upon the shield of Satan, and Death will be met and destroyed in his own battlefield. That animating touch had a virtue and voice in it for all generations. It marked a limit to the onward march of death, “Hitherto shalt thou come.” It reached to the end of time. “O death, I will be thy plague ! O grave I will be thy destruction ! Hitherto thou hast been unchallenged in thy stronghold, but know, there is One now walking in the thickest of the dying, who is the Resurrection and the Life.”

There was pollution, according to the Jewish law, in any contact with the dead. The touch of anything that had come in contact with the dead was defiling, but in a less degree, and the Saviour doing honour to that law which His death was to abolish, did not touch the body but the bier. The multitude thus awed around Him, the voice of Jesus broke the silence, “Young man, I say unto thee, Arise.” Where the spirit that had once quickened this

body passed the interval we know not, but that voice wakened and recalled it across that shadowy border from which so few have returned. The thrill of life returned with it, and the pulses began to beat in that form, shrouded and perfumed for the grave. Then a strange consciousness came over him, as, stretched upon his bier, a crowd of confused remembrances surged upon his mind, and he that was dead sat up and began to speak, to utter the name in memory uppermost, that as she met his eye had been last upon his lips as he closed his eyes in death. "And Jesus delivered him to his mother : Woman, behold thy son." That power which had just quickened the dead, and called the things which be not as though they were, was only to be rivalled by that gentleness which reserved to itself the pleasure of giving back to his mother the child so miraculously restored. Then came a fear on all, and they glorified God. May we not hope that some more lasting impression was produced on some than mere wonder and awe ? That that memorable day at Nain became in a spiritual sense, the beginning of days to many, the day from which they could date the awakening that had issued in the gift of life eternal to their souls ?

Dear brethren, such miracles as these have ceased, nor is there now the glory of those days on earth when the shadows of apostles and saints had a healing virtue wherever they passed. But all these were but types and symbols of a higher miracle, which there is still power coming from on high to do, for which there is a mightier necessity in the case of each of us, and in which a greater blessing lies—the communication of spiritual life to our souls dead in trespasses, the deliverance of the soul from the curse and power of pollution of sin, the great change which Scripture

calls regeneration, a second birth of the soul, without which no man shall enter the kingdom of God. "Through sin, death has acquired a fearful ascendancy, not only over the body, but the soul. We see it reigning all round us ; it is another thing to feel the reality of its reign within us. It is this life, this revival of our fallen nature, this remoulding of them in that holy image which faded at the touch of sin that Christ only can impart. This He came into the world to proclaim. This He died upon the cross to accomplish. This He is exalted to bestow. This is the glad tidings of the gospel : Christ hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. This is the gospel record, "that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son." "I am the resurrection and the life, he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live : and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." Shall the guilt lie on any of us of despising the great salvation and turning away from the voice of Him that speaketh? "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."

Is there not encouragement to all who desire this gift of life from the hands of the Son of God ? He who pitied the poor widow weeping for her son, will He not be touched with tender compassion for a poor sinner weeping for his soul ? To show His willingness as well as His ability to perform this greatest miracle, three cases are recorded in Scripture,—the daughter of Jairus, this young man, and Lazarus in his grave four days. What He did for the body at all stages of death natural, He can do and He will do for the soul at all stages of death spiritual ; to Him the issues of death belong. You who have received it, want to come,

not only that you might have life, but should be daily coming that you may have it more abundantly. He can impart to you such a fitness it is to meet all manner of life's difficulties, fit you for the whole work and warfare of obedience, and clear deliver of all its terrors. By His death He has delivered him that had the power of death. By His resurrection He has rolled away the stone, and made the grave the beaten road to glory. This woman would not forget her child, neither will He forget you. And as He delivered him a living man out of his mother's arms—so that time is coming, when with all the souls He has redeemed around Him—saints at His feet—He shall stand forth in heaven and say, 'Behold I and the children which thou hast given me.' 'The ransom of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads. They shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.'

III.

*[Preached at the Opening of the New Presbyterian Church,
Hampstead. Nov. 1862.]*

“To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.”—
1 PETER ii. 4, 5.

EARTH has witnessed few scenes more sublime, none in which all the elements of outward magnificence were more strikingly blended with those of deep religious reverence and awe, than that which was presented by the Temple of Solomon on the day of its dedication. The holy and beautiful house crowning, with its fresh undimmed splendour, the terraced steep of Moriah—the vast congregation of worshippers that filled its courts and colonnades—the rich and solemn swell of choral melody, when minstrels and singers joined in the exulting halleluiah—the great altar in the open court with the brazen platform in front of it, on which the youthful prince kneeled down upon his knees in sight of that breathless multitude and spread forth his hands to heaven—the fire descending in answer to his prayer, and consuming the sacrifice, and the cloud of glory filling the house, so that the priests could not stand to minister;—nothing is wanting to complete the solemn impressiveness of the spectacle. Many

centuries had gone by, and the temple still stood, after many vicissitudes, in something like its earliest grandeur, and on its ancient site, when Jerusalem, the Holy City, witnessed another and a different scene.

In some humble dwelling, in one of its obscurer streets, a little company of worshippers is gathered together in an upper room. There is no outward splendour here to attract the eye, no imposing rites, no stately ceremonial, no altar, no priest, no ringing burst of melody. A few devoted men and women joining in fervent supplication, nothing more, "when suddenly there came a sound from heaven like a rushing mighty wind," and cloven tongues of flame are seen hovering over each of them, and in this baptism of fire every heart is kindled with holy love and zeal, every voice bursts forth in accents of adoring wonder and praise. In this outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, in fulfilment of the Saviour's promise, and in token of His divine and almighty power, we see the dedication of that spiritual temple which He founded on this earth, we behold the beginning of that Church which is not for one nation, but for all people, which is not in its essential features outward and visible, but inward, set up in all believing, loving, and obedient hearts, which is not to continue for a season and pass away, but to endure for ever, as a kingdom of righteousness, and peace, and joy. The first temple might be externally more glorious in all its attributes of earthly pomp and splendour, but this, in its simplicity, in its spirituality, has a glory that excelleth. From the day of its Pentecostal consecration, it has grown and spread, and still, with the silent resistless energy of that Divine life that is in it, it is extending its limits from land to land. And while the temple that so long crowned

the brow of Zion has passed away, not one stone left upon another, and the faith, of which it was the home and the shrine, has been petrified into a lifeless form, and seems, as we see it now, to be likened only to one of those antique colossal forms reared amidst the level wastes of Egyptian sands, with its stony gaze fixed immovably on the mighty past, the faith of Christ is still strong and ardent, still pressing onwards with unwasted force, renewing before our eyes its signs and wonders of saving power, everywhere gathering its trophies of redeeming grace. It is still mighty as ever to subdue the minds of men, and to link believing and rejoicing hearts together in its blessed communion of faith and love ; and, while moving about in constant ministrations of mercy by the abodes of men, and speaking its blessed message to the sinful and weary heart, it can look out with radiant glance into a future brighter than the past. For, according to His promise, it looks for the time when all nations shall stand and worship within the precincts of the Christian Temple, all kingdoms shall lay their crowns at Christ's feet, all languages shall speak His name, and the whole world shall be lightened with His glory.

It is under the emblem of a building that the apostle speaks of the Church of Christ in this world, or rather of the form in which Christian life must manifest itself, and come to the full measure of its perfection. He shows what are the essential and distinctive marks of all living religion, of true, deep, vital, renewing faith in Christ.

I. The building rests on a *foundation*.—This foundation is Jesus Christ. He is the living stone, to whom coming, He says of these Christian men, that they were built up a spiritual house. Apart from this connexion with Him, He

as the living stone, and they as lively stones resting on Him, they could in no sense form a constituted part of the living temple of which He speaks. And here it is important to remember whose these words are. They are the words of that apostle, to whom the Master and Lord of the temple Himself has said, as if singling him out for pre-eminence above his brethren, “Thou art Peter, and on this rock will I build my church.” It is clear that *he* did not understand this statement in the sense to which it has been perverted by a later age, that he had no thought of applying it to himself in any individual or official acceptation, as if supremacy had been given to him above the rest. Christ Himself is the living stone, the sure foundation, *he* only a stone in the building that rests on Him. And if He was the first to preach the truth in the streets of Jerusalem, that through that Jesus who was crucified, whom God had raised from the dead, and exalted to the fellowship of glory, salvation alone could come to sinful man, this did not make him the Rock, but only a witness of the Rock to others. The truth he preached was the suffering and glorified Redeemer, the only Rock; and in this sense it is said, not of him exclusively, but of all who had borne a similar testimony, and witnessed the like good confession, that the “Church was built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone.” Other foundation can no man lay than that which God laid—Christ in His eternal Sonship—Christ in His suffering manhood—Christ in His exalted mediatorship—Christ the Revealer of the Father, the Fulfiller of all righteousness, the one Sacrifice for sin, Redeemer from the curse, Head of the Spiritual Creation, the Author and Finisher of faith. Prophet, Priest, and King, He centres in Himself all the scattered rays of

glory, wears on His brow every crown of lustre, anointed by a name that is above every name. To Him I, helpless, guilty, perishing, can look in my extremity. To His cross I can cling; in His righteousness I can trust; through His merits and mediation I have free access and perfect acceptance with God. This, and none other, is the "living stone," the Rock of Ages, firm and enduring ground of my eternal hopes. I believe and am persuaded, I know this standeth sure, this foundation can never fail. "I know that my Redeemer liveth. This Friend can never change. Jesus Christ the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

II. The materials of the building.—They are described as *lively stones*. It might seem to be a straining, this expansion of the symbol the apostle employs, but we must keep in mind the truth that it is on *union with Christ* that all life depends; that God has His true dwelling in living souls; that the only reasonable service He can accept is the living sacrifice of love offered by renewed and spiritually-minded men. The foundation gives strength and stability to all the parts of the building that are rested upon it, and the life that is in Christ is transfused into each soul, the moment it begins to rest its hope in Him. He is life in Himself, He is the source of life to all who believe in Him, as naturally as from the root life flows into all the branches, or from the exhaustless, invisible spring of water, life flows in ceaseless circulation wherever it finds a channel to run in, or an empty vessel to fill. It is the same truth that lies at the core of the apostle's words, for that spiritual temple which God is now raising for His own glory in the world, the life that is in Him who is the foundation, is conveyed into every stone that adds to the symmetry and com-

pleness of the perfect building. It is in coming to Him that this life is first implanted in us, in coming to realise our own personal need of a Saviour, and His all-sufficiency as a Saviour, that all spiritual life begins, and it is by faith in Him that this life is manifested and developed. And in becoming more deeply rooted and grounded in His love, in being more visibly animated by His Spirit, and transformed into His image, in a more steadfast and harmonious progress in Christian graces and virtues, our spiritual life grows and unfolds to its full and ripe maturity.

The glory of this spiritual house is, that there is life in every part of it. No stone adjusted into its place that has not been selected by Divine care, and bears not on it the mark of the Divine hand.

A few days before our Saviour's death, we are told, that as He sat on the Mount of Olives over against the temple, where the whole range of its courts and cloisters, terraces and colonnades of marble, uplighted in snow-white lustre and purity in the bright blue air, was open to His eye, and one of His disciples thought to draw forth some expression of admiration, "Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here," He could only answer with a tear of sadness, "Seest thou these great buildings ? there shall not be left one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down." How much more wonderful and noble is the meanest creature that has life in it, the least of God's creatures in whom the pulse of life is beating, than the fairest and proudest creations of human art and skill that have no breath in them ! Nor can we wonder that the ardent historian, after describing the magnificence of the great cathedral which a Christian emperor reared in rivalry of Solomon, should make the reflection, " Yet how dull is

the artificial, how insignificant the labourer, if it be compared with the formation of the vilest insect that crawls upon the surface of the temple." Might there not be in Peter's mind some remembrance of his Master's words, as thinking of the priceless value of one immortal soul, one ransomed from guilt, redeemed by the blood of Christ, and quickened by Him with life imperishable and divine, he speaks of the sublimity and excellency of the spiritual temple, as consisting in this, that the poorest and the lowliest of men, who lives a life of faith in Christ, and walks after Him in the way of holiness, is a living stone, built on Christ, the living foundation, and an essential part of that glorious edifice which shall stand eternal in the heavens.

We see here the great aim of the gospel ministry and all Christian ordinances. It is to bring men to Christ through bringing home to them their sinfulness and their helplessness, through convincing them that so long as they are under the bondage of corruption they are in a state of spiritual death, to persuade them to come to Christ, that they may have life. To come to the knowledge, to trust the love of Christ, is to pass from death unto life, to feel the power of a spiritual resurrection through which we begin to live not unto ourselves, but unto Him who died for us and rose again. And its further end is to build them up in Him in a life of Christian love and devoted obedience. Where there is life there must be growth, where there is any genuine faith there must be constant aspiration to active and healthy progress in the way of holiness, and all that is needful for this is secured in the inexhaustible fulness that is in Christ. So that daily to know Him better in more intimate communion, and ever enlarging experience, the more perfect is our reliance, the

richer do we become in all divine resources, the more fruitful in all holy attainments, the happier in all gracious affections, the more loving, the more gentle, the more pure, the more devoted, the more as He was in this world.

III. And this brings us to notice the view the apostle gives of the finished edifice. The living stones are built up a spiritual house, and all together forming one building, which is silently and gradually rising to its completeness, and shall at last, when the mystery of His Providence is finished, be seen in its perfect symmetry and beauty. But there is another truth inseparable from this, which cannot be too deeply or too constantly impressed on the Christian mind. It is, that each believer is himself a temple of the living God, honoured by His own indwelling, purified for His service ; all His powers and affections consecrated to it, as the vessels of the ancient sanctuary to His peculiar use. “Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have of God.” And “ye are not your own,” “the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.” The design for which Christ came into the world was, that God might have a habitation in the heart of man again, to cast out from it that evil one whose presence had so long defiled it, whose power had so long enslaved it, to claim it from that long desecration, or to make it His chosen habitation, His sacred and illumined shrine. And in every heart that has been quickened to spiritual life, there is abiding the Spirit of the living God. How earnestly is this pressed as a motive for cultivating growing spirituality of mind, heavenliness of affection, purity of heart and life! “What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? what communion hath light with

darkness ? what concord hath Christ with Belial ? what agreement hath the temple of God with idols ? for ye are the temple of the living God ; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them ; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people."

"Ye are the temple of the living God, ye as lively stones are built up a spiritual house." Hence under the gospel all consecration of places or forms, as making one spot of earth where man can worship God holier than another, has passed away. There was such a consecration of the ancient temple, marked by a visible descent and abiding of glory ; but in no earthly shrine is the radiant presence now beheld by the natural eye. The hour has come, when neither, in this mountain at Jerusalem, nor in that of Samaria, do men worship the Father, but wherever the heart worships in spirit and truth, there is His gracious presence, there hovers a spiritual glory, there is holy ground. It is His own ordinance, that we should unite in His worship, and hold communion one with another. He has permitted us to dedicate this house to His service, but this imparts to it no mystic virtue, no material consecration. It is only if His presence in these ordinances is devoutly sought—if He here receives the worship of contrite and lowly hearts—if here the gospel is faithfully proclaimed, which is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth—if through the gracious energy of the Holy Spirit, that word is made effectual in converting the soul, making wise the simple, enlightening the eyes, gladdening the heart, filling it with peace and joy in believing—if here the wanderer is guided into the path of life, the Christian pilgrim restored in the way of holiness,—this place will be indeed the house of God, hallowed by His presence, brightened

with His glory. This is the only end for which this building has been reared, for which in faith and prayer it has been dedicated to the worship of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, God over all, blessed for ever. That work is now to begin, and let me remind you, that in doing it, each has to bear a part. All whose faith is something more than a form, a name, all whose hearts have ever felt a thrill of gratitude to God who called them by His grace, ever been kindled into a glow of love to the Saviour who redeemed them, are associated in the brotherhood of Christian service, are gathered into the ranks of that holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices. We know no exclusive order of priesthood, no sacerdotal caste. There is here no altar-screen, no mystic enclosure only to be entered by consecrated feet. All are called to offer themselves up living sacrifices, to labour to bring others into the fellowship of the same hope and joy. This sanctuary is but the earthly and the transient scaffolding for the erection of the spiritual temple. It will well fulfil its purpose as here living stones are brought, and hewn out and built upon the living foundation, and all fitly framed together grow up into an habitation for the living God. Let it be our prayer that of this place it may be said, "This and that man were born in her." And let us be always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as we know that our labour is not in vain in the Lord. Each day brings us some remembrance that the time is short, that the night is coming in which no man can work. The voice from heaven is always calling, "Be ye also ready, for at such an hour, when ye think not, the Son of man cometh."

One who joined with us in our worship last Lord's day in the sanctuary we have left—one who had long looked

forward to the day that finds us for our first Sabbath service assembled here—one to whose heart the welfare of our church from its first planting in this place was very dear, and in whose prayerful remembrance and active sympathy its peace and its prosperity were ever tenderly borne—has been suddenly removed from earth, and has gone, I trust, to be a worshipper in the courts of the temple above. Standing here I cannot but feel as if a shadow of eternity were cast more visibly over these opening services by the impressive event that has occurred in the midst of us, to chasten our gladness into holy fear. To us might the summons come as suddenly, at midnight. Are we prepared to meet it? Are our loins girt, our lamps burning, like good and faithful servants who wait for their Lord? If there is any doubt, let us feel that indifference is criminal, that delay may be death. Here and now resolve and pray in our hearts to God that this day may be the beginning of days to us, and this place, hallowed and endeared for ever, as the scene of the willing and earnest consecration of a life, yielded to the service of the Redeemer, that shall make it even now radiant with a blessed hope that eternity shall fulfil and crown in His presence and His joy for ever.

IV.

“Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.”—ROM. iii. 25.

ONE often sees among other things issuing from the press, a book that has been written about one of our distant colonies, and that contains valuable information for those who intend to settle there. This “Emigrant’s Guide” may fall into the hands of two men equally intelligent and fond of information, but it may be read with different feelings by either. The one reads it with a general kind of interest, as he would read any other book of the day; the other reads it and re-reads it, makes memoranda as he goes along, weighs its statements, treasures up its hints, makes it in fact the man of his counsel. You will have divined the secret cause of the difference between these two readers. The one has no special interest in that remote region of the world, the other has serious thoughts of proceeding to it, and making it his home. The one reads it for mere reading’s sake, the other reads it that he may act on the information. Precisely the same difference exists between the way in which two men read the Bible, and especially the Epistle to the Romans. The river of the water of life is

clear as crystal whether evangelist or apostle holds to our lips the cup he has filled from it, but we may look upon the kind of interest with which this epistle is read as a test of religious character. To many it is dry and wearisome, and seldom do they turn to it. But once let a man be thoroughly roused to spiritual concern, intently occupied with the great problem, “What must I do to be saved?” and he will hang over it with absorbing interest, and the light of truth which shines from it into his heart will be as bright and gladdening as that which streams from any of the Gospels. We may narrow the observation we have made, and say, that this epistle will be read with very different feelings by the same man at different times. Christian biography tells us of one labouring under deep spiritual distress who once opened it almost mechanically. His eye fell on the words before us. He had read them a hundred times before, but they had never spoken to his heart. Now he reads, and in a sudden and marvellous light he sees the mystery of atonement, the cross of Christ rises before him, and all that was done thereon for him is understood, the darkness has past and the true light now shineth. Thenceforth his holiest associations clustered round these words, and long after, when the gloom of a strange disease settled down on his mind, William Cowper, for of him we speak, could write those words—looking back upon that time of blessedness, as Adam in his old age would remember his first walk in Paradise—

“ Where is the blessedness I knew
When first I saw the Lord ?
Where is the soul-refreshing view
Of Jesus and His word ?

“ What peaceful hours I once enjoy'd,
How sweet their memory still,
But they have left an aching void
The world can never fill.”

The character in which Christ is set before us as a *Propitiation*.

I. By this may be generally understood, the setting forth of Christ's death as that atoning sacrifice by means of which the justice of God was satisfied for the dishonour done to His holy law, and reconciliation made between the two parties lying at variance, God on the one side, and man on the other. An opinion widely prevalent in our day, and the distinguishing tenet of a popular school in theology, is, that it was not God who needed to be reconciled to man, but man to God. God is all goodness, all pity, all love ; it is man who is all distrust, all coldness and needless dread ; the only barrier is on man's side, there never was any on God's ; it needed no atoning oblation, no shedding of pure and holy blood to remove it. But this can only be held when one ignores the fact of sin, and the fact of holiness that abhors sin, and righteousness that must punish it, the fact of the law and the Law-giver, who, because He is all justice and all purity, must at all hazards be upheld. Till sin was punished, till God's righteousness was displayed, till His law had been magnified and made honourable in the face of the universe, God could not be reconciled to man. He was estranged from man, as well as man from Him ; the sinner shut out from God by the barrier of unpardoned guilt, and God shut out from the sinner by the barrier of insulted holiness. We cannot hold the radical truth of the text unless we bear

this in mind. This is the full meaning of the Son being set forth as a propitiation, as by His obedience and blood-shedding removing the double barrier, and standing in the middle space between them, God and man advancing can meet together on that open ground, and with their hands clasped in His, be set at one in Him.

II. But there is a special meaning in the word employed, to which we must call attention to understand it in all its force and beauty. There is an allusion in it to one of the most impressive symbols of the Jewish tabernacle ; it literally means “a propitiatory.” What was this propitiatory ? It was the lid or covering of the Ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holies, made of fine gold, and overshadowed on either side by the two cherubims with outspread wings, over which the Shekinah, the fiery cloud of the Divine Presence, rested. The name given to this was the “*mercy-seat*,” the resting-place of God’s glory, the throne of grace ; the mercy-seat and the propitiatory are one and the same thing. You will remember that God himself said, “There I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy-seat, from between the two cherubims.” If you turn to Lev. xvi. 12-15, you will see how it was that God on this propitiatory was to be approached, how alone He would meet and commune with sinful man from this throne of grace. On the day of atonement the high priest entered the Holy of Holies with a censer filled with burning coals from the altar, and his hands full of incense. The incense was cast on the coals, and a fragrant cloud arose and covered with its smoke the mercy-seat ; this was prayer rising to God, without which He cannot be ap-

proached by man. But mark what followed ; while this blue incense smoke was floating over the mercy-seat, the priest was to take of the blood of the victim previously slain, and sprinkle it upon the mercy-seat, and before it seven times. And this falling of blood-drops on the pure golden covering of the ark was the making of atonement, and then and there did it become a propitiatory, where God accepted the sacrifice, frankly forgave the sin of His people, and graciously communed with man. This will help us to understand what the apostle means when he says here that Christ is the propitiatory. Christ is the blood-sprinkled mercy-seat. In Him God draws near to man. On the pure gold of His essential (*divinity*) holiness lies the traces of the blood His suffering manhood shed.

The Father sees it and says, That blood was shed to honour my law, and looks forth on the sinner well pleased. The sinner sees it and says, That blood was shed to atone for my guilt, and looks up to meet the Father's smile of forgiveness and peace. God and man meeting here are reconciled. "He is our peace," making both one by the blood of atonement, or at-one-ment.

1. The mercy-seat or propitiatory covered the law. The two stone tables which condemned the sinner lay beneath it. Between them and God was the covering propitiatory with sprinkled blood, else sin could not have been forgiven, and God could not have been gracious. And thus only can you be freed from condemnation. Till you have come to the blood of sprinkling, even to Jesus the Mediator, till you have met with God in Christ, till Christ stands between you and the law, covering it with His pierced hand, there is nothing to shelter you from its righteous penalties.

“The handwriting of ordinances is not blotted out, that sentence is not cancelled, its voice of accusation is not stilled, it appeals at any moment against you.” “The soul that sinneth, it shall die.” “He that believeth not is condemned already.” He that would presume to draw near to God and lay his hand on that law without that covering over it, without that blood between, would meet with the fate of the men of Bethshemesh when they looked into the ark. But there is “no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh : that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”

2. The propitiatory was the meeting-place of God and man. Here, He said, “I will meet with thee and commune with thee.” Men sometimes drew near to God presumptuously, and God met with them in His glory, but that meeting was terrible, never to be forgotten. On one day two men, anointed priests they were and sons of Aaron, went into the holy place with their censers in their hand. They burned incense before the altar, but not according to the appointed rites, not with pure and holy hearts, it was strange fire. And suddenly a blinding glory flashed forth from the inner shrine and consumed them. They died before the Lord. An awful memorial of the fate of all whom God meets out of Christ. *Here* will I meet with thee, not elsewhere ; or if thou wilt have it elsewhere, not as a God of mercy, but of holiness,

terrible in its bright unsufferable glory, terrible as a consuming fire. But here will I meet with him who will meet with me. Thou who art still far from God, seeking peace but finding none, weary with thy load of sin, here God is waiting to meet with thee if thou wilt meet with Him. He is waiting to be gracious, waiting to speak forgiveness and hold forth the hand of reconciliation to give peace to thy conscience, hope to thy heart, holiness to thy soul. Here He will commune with thee, not turning away, but drawing near; seeking thy confidence, winning thee to a full and penitent confession, that He may open up His own warm heart of love and discover all the riches of His mercy. And as He is there in Christ reconciling sinners to Himself, so it is in Christ that He meets and communes with His believing people. In Him and through Him God makes known all His will to man; Christ is the living utterance of the Father's thoughts, the visible revelation of the Father's glory: "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father." To grow in the knowledge of Christ is to increase in the knowledge of God. As you walk with Him, God walks beside you. As you lean on Him and look on His face, you read there all the Father's heart. What a cheering thought to the believer, that He who leads him step by step along earthly ways of suffering, can guide him step by step up bright ascents of holiness into the innermost sanctuary of glory. His home from everlasting; there our elder Brother, our kinsman Redeemer, is over the house of God, all the keys hanging at His girdle that can open each door of its many mansions and unlock all its treasures of grace.

3. The propitiatory was the place of prayer and offering. No believing Israelite would have hope that his

prayers would be heard, or his sacrifice accepted, except through realising the scene within the veil. God present there on the blood-sprinkled mercy-seat. As he stood before the altar in the outer court, the eye of faith rested on the propitiatory within. It is thus that we must draw near to God in prayer, in penitence, in praise, in self-consecration ; in every office of devotion, in every act of duty. We cannot enter into the holiest but by the blood of Jesus, but through faith in that blood the lowliest heart has boldness to enter there. At the sound of that password uttered by faith, the veil is drawn aside and God is seen on His throne of grace. Wherever and whenever that cry goes up to heaven—Faith's hand on the head of the sacrifice—in whatever desert spot of the earth it may be, God's presence is there making it holy ground, there the foot of the heavenly ladder rests, the angels of God ascend and descend upon the Son of man. Our most fervent prayers, our best and holiest duties, would have no acceptance but in Him ; the poison spot of sin, the cankering rust of earthliness is in them all till that blood touches and purifies them. Not as the ashes of the heifer purified the Israelite from his uncleanness, the blood of Him who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God must purge the conscience before the soul can offer a living sacrifice. There must be a constant application. To the very last, the holiest saint that ever lived has no standing except in Christ ; not his sincerity, not his innocence, not the works of righteousness which he has done, not the peace nor joy in believing He has experienced, none of these things, but the righteousness his Surety wrought, the blood his Saviour shed, the death that Jesus died, and the life He lives in heaven.

A few points of practical instruction.

1. The abounding grace of God. He sets Him forth as the propitiatory. It was He who designed and presided over the consecration of the mercy-seat of Israel, saying, "There will I meet with thee." We believe the minuteness with which everything relating to the mercy-seat was arranged, was meant to prefigure the completeness of the plan of salvation in the Father's mind from the beginning. His hand made and fashioned the true mercy-seat, when the Mediator said on coming into the world, "A body hast thou prepared me." And it is He who devised the whole method of salvation, who shows Himself in Christ reconciling a guilty world unto Himself. What greater proof of His love than that He, whose law the sinner had broken, should provide the Lamb for the sin-offering, should raise the altar and bind the victim, and stretch forth His hand and strike the blow, and then proclaim, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am God and there is none else." A just God and yet a Saviour. "Truly where sin abounded, grace did much more abound."

2. The all-sufficiency and suitableness of this propitiation. It is often spoken of as an exhibition of God's mercy, and so it is; but this is not all, and if we think it is, we have but an imperfect and mistaken view of it. What makes it truly divine is that here God displays His righteousness in the remission of sins. It is not only a gracious Father, but it is a just, holy, sin-punishing Judge who here pardons the sinner and stretches forth the golden sceptre from the throne of grace. It is the thought of that justice and holiness, those glorious perfections which must be at

eternal and irreconcilable variance with sin, that fill the soul with dread when first awakened, when it sees itself, a guilty creature standing in the flaming brightness of God's law. The gloom that is around and within it is only broken by those awful flashes of light. The way is dark as when it goes crying, "What must I do to be saved." On some happy moment it sees the cross before it, and God's, not Pilate's, superscription over it, and lighting up all its meaning. What does it read there? That God hates sin, that He has punished sin, and yet that He forgives me my sin because my Surety has borne it in His own body on that tree. It reaches to the deepest hurt of conscience, that breathes a healing peace to the very core of my sin-troubled soul. I see that God is not only merciful, but just in His mercifulness, yea, never more just, more holy, more true to His holy nature and His holy law than when He justifieth the ungodly. It is the seeing God's righteousness as well as His mercy in the death of Christ that fills the soul with the light of realised salvation.

3. It is by *faith* we become interested in the propitiation. With my burden of sin I come God-led to the cross, and look up and see the atoning sacrifice, and light shines into my heart, I understand it, I believe it, I accept it with all my soul as made for me. This is faith—my burden falls off, my guilt is pardoned. "Be not afraid, only believe." Wretched, almost despairing, the iron frame wasted by inward trouble, Luther lies on his pallet in the Augustinian convent at Erfurt. An old monk who attends on him one day repeats the words, "I believe in the remission of sins." The words take hold. The great Physician through them lays His cool hand on that stricken soul. The crisis of the fever is past, health of body came with

peace of mind. And in the might of this, the solitary monk goes forth to shake Christendom, and accomplish the Reformation. But oh ! how many cast a cold, heartless, unbelieving look on that sight of redeeming sorrow and love, that cross. They may see Him, but not now ; behold Him, but not nigh. They may understand, but they do not believe ; they may believe, but they do not want to accept it. They regard it as a sight which does not concern them, because as yet they have never felt the reality of sin and God's wrath against it. Nothing proclaims the sinfulness of man like that very cross of Christ, nothing aggravates his guilt so much as living in sin within sight of it. Every time the gospel is preached that cross is lifted up, and the Saviour evidently set before you. The same proclamation is made to you which wounded to the quick the sinners in the streets of Jerusalem, some of them men whose hands were stained with the blood of the Lord of glory. "Repent and be baptized every one of you." Believe and ye shall receive it. But be sure that you believe, that you come to the Saviour for yourselves, and receive from His hand the gift of salvation for yourself.

You are in danger ; you must feel that. You need deliverance ; you must feel that. Deliverance is provided ; you must feel that, and avail yourself of it. This is faith. Your life is at stake, you must haste to the refuge ; the door is open, you must enter in. This is faith. Escape for your life, tarry not in the plain. Flee for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before you in the gospel—Jesus Christ, whom God is now setting forth as the propitiation.

V.

“And David saw that Saul had come out to seek his life: and David was in the wilderness of Ziph in a wood. And Jonathan, Saul’s son, arose, and went to David into the wood, and strengthened his hand in God. And he said unto him, Fear not: for the hand of Saul my father shall not find thee: and thou shalt be king over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee; and that also Saul my father knoweth. And they two made a covenant before the Lord: and David abode in the wood, and Jonathan went to his house.”—1 SAM. xxiii. 15–18.

IT is an old story, that of the friendship between these two young men; but how fresh is it still, how full of life and nature, how warmly it appeals to the noblest sympathies of our common humanity! In the roll of near thirty centuries no dust has gathered on it, time has not dimmed the brightness of that pure, generous, unselfish, manly affection. Those hands once clasped so fast together in evil days have long been sundered, and the lips stilled for ever that swore that brotherly covenant. In their death they *were* divided,—Jonathan, in the flower of youth, sleeping the warrior’s sleep under the tree of Jabesh, and David, old and gray-headed, laid amid a nation’s tears in the royal mausoleum on Zion. Yet there is that in the loves and friendships of this mysterious nature that defies time and the grave; the names and memories of these two are linked indissolubly together; side by side they

stand, in the nobleness of their faith, in the beauty of their self-devotion, and look forth upon us, an example of all that is true, and just, and pure, and loving, out of the mist of years. How touchingly is their first meeting told, the beginnings of that friendship that was ever after between them so constant, so unchangeable. It was on the evening of the battle when the giant fell. "It came to pass when David had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul." Then Jonathan and David made a covenant. All was bright and peaceful then. Hope could paint the future in its richest hues ; they were to go side by side ; they thought not of the sorrows and dangers that were to come,—to come soon and suddenly, and to expose their affection to so severe a strain. In such circumstances many a compact would have been broken in sunder, but theirs stood the test. Nor is it difficult to divine wherein its great strength lay. They were men of the true old Hebrew stamp and mould—grave, earnest, God-fearing men ; their vows were made in God's name, hallowed by a common hope, sealed and consecrated by prayer. Again and again this comes out. To mention only one instance. When, to avoid the jealous watch of Saul, they took leave of each other and met in secret, we are told that "they wept one with another, until David exceeded. And Jonathan said, Go in peace, forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in the name of the Lord, saying, The Lord be between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed for ever." There we see the covenant between them was not one of sentiment but of sacredness. This is still more remarkably brought out in the passage before us.

I. The situation of David at this time. To outward view nothing could have been more dark and disheartening. It was one of extremity, enough to have cast down a mind that had only its own nerve and elasticity, strength and courage and hopefulness to depend upon, into despondency. Keenly must he have felt the strange reverses that had befallen him. Not long since he had been the champion and idol of Israel, the favourite of the king—now a broken and banished man, driven from court and city, hunted like a partridge upon the mountains. Unwittingly he has brought misfortune on his kindred ; the quiet home at Bethlehem is broken up, his father and mother in their old age forced to seek an asylum in the land of Moab, from which his ancestress Ruth had come long ago. He and his men have been wandering from place to place “whithersoever they could go.” And now he is shut up in some rocky fastness or cavern, a stronghold buried in the forests that covered the mountains in that outpost of Judah.

To this period in his chequered life may be referred that psalm, “I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me : refuge failed me ; no man cared for my soul ; I cried unto Thee, O Lord ; I said, Thou art my refuge and portion in the land of the living. Attend unto my cry, for I am brought very low ; deliver me from my persecutors, for they are stronger than I.” How different was it with David in this solitude of wood and mountain from the time when, with a free, unanxious heart, he had led his flocks in the green pastures and by the still waters of Bethlehem, and sung of the shepherd care of God. God had strange ways of training His servants for their work. Would you have thought that this man, so persecuted, this outlaw under ban, was

the man of Heaven's election, the chosen and anointed king of Israel ? Yet so it was. All these troubles that have come upon him are distinctly traceable to this,—Heaven's calling and consecration was upon him, marking him out from amongst men.

The training of Israel in the wilderness is acted over again in this man—for his future work, this hard apprenticeship—for his high vocation, this stern and protracted discipline.

So has it been acted over and over again in the experience of the servant of God. In the deserts of the world the best and holiest have left unfading footprints ; Abraham, Moses, Elijah, the Baptist, and a greater than all, have been there. So may each expect who is striving to walk in the steps of Christ, to be forced from the crowd, led into the wilderness to be tried and tempted, to feel the solitariness that comes over the spirit when, in the battle with invisible foes, it feels stripped of all native strength, bereft of all self-acquired resources, and must cast itself in its extremity on God. From the day that seal is set upon it, that oil of the spiritual consecration to be a “king and priest unto God,” poured upon its head, it must be as “Christ was in this world,” it must “fill up that which is behind in the sufferings of Christ,” it must share His tribulation, it must take up the cross. Yet always different from Him, the loved and first begotten Son of God, the greatest sufferer, the “Man of sorrows,” He who has sounded the mystery of every trial, and “in all points was tempted,” the only One who knew the reality of “forsaken,” what it was to be utterly alone, seeing no friend between earth and heaven when He cried, “My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me.”

II. Unlooked-for consolation. It was natural in David, in that life of hair-breadth escapes and ceaseless perils, with but a step between him and death, to say, "No man careth for my soul." Had it been literally true, he would have kept faster hold of the faithfulness of God. "I am poor and needy, yet the Lord thinketh upon me." Yet God will send him a message of hope, and by the hand which of all others in the world was the one to make it welcome. Not even an angel's visit could have put such courage and gladness into him ; his human heart yearned for the sound of a human voice, for the grasp of a human hand. And how must his drooping spirit have been revived, when that little group, whom the watcher on the cliff had at first discerned by the gleam of their armour, as they pressed forward up the broken mountain path and through the tangled thicket, proved to be friends, and Jonathan at their head. Very memorable that secret interview, that last and tenderest farewell. What more cheering words could have been spoken, what truer service could he have rendered than this, "he strengthened his hand in God." He reminded him of God's power, God's promise, God's presence.

1. God's *power*. David's enemy was the king of Israel at the head of its bravest warriors ; but what after all could he do against a life dear to God ?—invisible defenders, the shining ones of Mahanaim, lest any should hurt it, watched round it night and day. That hand which had turned aside the javelin hurled at his breast, were he lying prostrate and defenceless at Saul's feet, and the sword uplifted to strike, that hand could avert the blow. Omnipotence realised by faith, to what a vantage-ground does it lift the servant of the Highest, how out of weakness

does it make him strong. What a poor thing is this human power after all : it could not force Jonathan apart from David, it could not break the links of that friendship, it could not weaken, far less crush, that love which God had given as the solace of His life. And what a vain thing is all the power of the host of evil, all the might of darkness, when it tries to destroy the faith which is the life of God in the soul of man, to separate one believer from the love of Christ. “They shall never perish ; neither shall any one pluck them out of my hand.” “This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.”

2. God’s *promise*. Circumstances had greatly changed with David since the days of their friendship. They had courted and flattered him then, who were now seeking his life. The old times of his obscurity, the peaceful and happy days of his village life, were they not better than the evil days on which he had fallen now ? God’s promise had not changed. God had said that he would one day be king over Israel, and king he must be. He is now lurking in the gloomy recesses of the forests, but if God so wills it, it may be but a step from the wilderness to the throne. Nothing could alter the word that had gone forth from His lips. Saul knew it, though he set himself to falsify it. Jonathan knew it, and could dismiss all fear. David knew it, and could possess himself in patience. All that God hath said shall be, must be. “He speaks and it is done.” His yea is yea ; His nay, nay. “Thus saith the Lord ;” take your stand upon this, and you will find it sure and steadfast. Rest your hopes upon it, and you will find a firm foundation when all else reels and crumbles into dust. There may be doubts and perplexities round you, but he who has hold of a word of

God has a clue to guide through the gloomiest labyrinth, "a lamp for his feet, and a light for his path." Trials—but this is strong consolation—"call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me." Temptations—but on this shield of faith, "it is written," the fiery arrow of the tempter strikes and is quenched. Blessed is the repose of that doubting mind, sweet the rest and refreshing of that weary heart which has once learned to pillow itself on the promises of Jesus Christ. "If it were not so, I would have told you." "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee."

3. His *presence*. The sight of Jonathan in that strange and lonesome region was a sign that God had thought of him, that not one of His servant's troubles and anxieties was unknown or unregarded. But if no human friend had come, God would have still been with him. David had learned this in some measure; he was to learn it in darker days to come, when he would long for a sight of that face in vain. "Lover and friend put far from him, and his companions into darkness." "Thou art my hiding place," he was to say, not the forest's darkest covert, not the mountain cave, not the desert solitude, not the munitions of rocks, but "Thou art my rock and my fortress, and my tower of strength. From the ends of the earth will I cry unto Thee; when my heart is overwhelmed, lead me to the Rock that is higher than I." This was the secret of his trust; this he had learned by the strangest and hardest discipline. This we are to learn,—how real an attainment it may be to "dwell in the secret place of the Most High, to abide under the shadow of the Almighty,"—to have always the sense of His presence, in

the closet and in the crowd, in the stormy day and in the sleepless night, passing through the waters, standing in the furnace. No place so secret that He is not there—so solitary that we have not His society. No effort of enemies can exclude that Presence, no wall can be built high enough from earth to shut out the light of heaven. No gates and bars massive enough to keep out the Angel of Deliverance where in trouble and peril a saint is praying on his knees.

A few words of practical inference.

1. The best service Christian friends can render to friends,—“to strengthen each other’s hands in God, to exhort one another daily, to consider one another to provoke unto love and good works.” Surely those who are on the same road of pilgrimage should encourage each other by the way, speak of their difficulties, impart the result of their experience, recount their blessings, tell of the goodness and the mercy that have followed them, and animate each other by the blessed hopes, the vision of the King in His beauty, the prospect of the land that is far off. And what higher service can a Christian render to any with whom he is connected by ties of blood or neighbourhood, or familiar acquaintance, or even occasional intercourse, whom he may see thoughtless, living under the full influence of the world, than to bring them to the knowledge of Christ, to share with them the secret of his own happiness, to welcome them to a participation in his own hope. Are you doing this, my friends? If so readily the natural affections of your hearts gush forth in sympathy when you see those near and dear to you in sickness or in danger, should it not be doubly so with the affections of the renewed heart, prompting by kind and anxious efforts to

deliver them from the danger of a life without God, and a death without hope ?

2. Your encouragement. Jonathan was a true friend because he strengthened David's hand in God, in God's word. Keep to this, and all is well ; the simplicity conveys a saving impression : the bow drawn at a venture may send the arrow home. When we are drawn off this ground, our strength departs, we are weak as other men. The proof of it is before us. There was one thing Jonathan said that would have given a false encouragement, a precarious and deceitful hope, had David relied upon it. It was so natural that Jonathan, telling him of brighter days that were to come, should cheer his friend by saying that he would share his honours and his prosperity : "I shall be next to thee." A noble and princely soul was his ! No envy of David, no jealousy that he had come in and taken his birthright ; his fondest earthly hope was to live to see David king, and he tells David he will live to see it. Alas ! for Jonathan. Alas ! for earthly hopes. He could not look into the dark future ; he knew not these were his last words to David ; he thought not that ere that day should come he would be lying pierced by the Philistine arrow on the bleak height of Gilboa,—of the passionate lament, "I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan ; very pleasant hast thou been to me : thy love was wonderful, passing the love of women. How are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war perished ! "

That life must seem a failure, its hopes thus blighted, its course closed so soon. But now there was this success in it, that he had strengthened David's hand in God, that he had helped to maintain that confidence which finds sublime expression in the Psalms. That was a great and

worthy thing to have done. And these are the things which to have done will be to make your lives truly useful, your memories truly blessed. Not to have achieved some splendid success, not to have gained a great name, or left a great fortune, but to have strengthened some weak hand, and comforted some weary heart, to have taken by the hand brother or child, friend or neighbour, and brought them to Christ, or to have bent over some poor stranger by the way-side and poured oil and wine into his wounds, to have filled for some parched and thirsty lip a cup of water from the well of salvation.

3. It was a human friend that brought comfort to David. It is a human friend that comes in our spiritual extremity to us. No angel, no spirit, but the man Christ Jesus, speaking to us with the sound of our kindly speech laying upon us the kind touch of a warm human hand. "In all things it behoved Him to be made like unto us." Why? that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest, "taken from among men that He might have compassion on the ignorant, and on those that are out of the way." Lost in the wilderness, the good Shepherd has come after you to seek and save you, and bring you to the fold. Once you hear His voice and follow Him, you have a friend tried and constant, a friend watchful, almighty, and unchanging, a friend born for sorrow, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. "Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." You may tremble as you stand on the Rock, but the Rock cannot tremble under you.

VI.

For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh ; how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God ?"—HEB. ix. 13, 14.

THE variety of the rites of the Jewish law, and the minuteness with which they are described, at first sight may appear strange to many minds. In reading those parts of Holy Scripture where the ceremonies of the tabernacle or temple worship are enjoined, the offerings and cleansing, the solemn festivals of penitence and joy, they seem to be lost in a maze of ancient forms and worn-out symbols,—rites which once had a sacred import, and spake with thrilling voices to the inmost heart of Israel, but which have lost all their meaning to the actual world, and look as mysterious as those strange lines of hieroglyphics which you see on the walls of Egyptian and Assyrian temples. Even those inscriptions can tell us something when we find a clue to them. And there is one key that unlocks every secret, and opens every symbol rite of the Jewish law ; one grand reality that lights up with infinite significance those dim shadows of the temple. The name of Christ is written on the "door-posts and lintels," it meets us everywhere

within its walls, and the blood that streamed from every altar, the water that sparkled in every laver, were but ways of keeping before the eye and the heart of the worshipper the great fact of His sacrifice for sin.

The ordinance of the red heifer provided for one defiled with contact with the dead, and the minuteness with which every part of it was regulated, shows the importance attached to it. The words before us are the interpretation of this symbolic rite.

I. The manner in which prepared. The animal was to be of a reddish colour, free from blemish, and one whose neck had never been touched by the yoke. The fact of its being a sin-offering, slain to cleanse the Israelite from pollution, would seem to account for the selection of this colour. It was the deep crimson dye of guilt which, through a better sacrifice, was to be purged away. Unspotted, untouched by the yoke, it was the type of the pure and sinless Surety, who had never passed under the bondage of sin, who, in His own divinity one with the Father, was under no yoke of law. Of His own free-will, not by necessity of nature, He stooped His neck to the yoke, "and though He was a Son, yet learned" obedience to the Father's will "by the things which He suffered."

Thus chosen, the victim was led without the camp by Eleazer, the priest next in rank to Aaron, and slain—in this, of course, a vivid symbol of Him who, that He might redeem us by His own blood, suffered without the gate of the Holy City. At this point the peculiar character of the rite begins. On the spot where it was slaughtered the heifer was to be wholly consumed, and as the smoke and flame ascended, the priest was to take cedar wood, a tuft

of scarlet wool and hyssop, and cast them into the fire to be mingled with the ashes of the victim. The hyssop was a plant that possessed purifying virtue, and as such was employed in the service of the temple. The cedar wood, giving out its fragrance in the fire, might denote the worth and efficacy of the sacrifice in the sight of God, and the shred of scarlet might be meant to bring the great fact of guilt more clearly before the mind, to set that sin before his eyes which was the cause of the sacrifice being offered. The ashes were to be carefully collected, and preserved in a clean place without the camp, with a view to their future use. There was nothing in this heap of dust to attract the eyes of men ; they might seem only fit to be trodden under foot, or to be scattered to the winds ; but they were precious in the sight of God—they were the ashes of sacrifice. That body which hung pierced and bleeding on the cross of Calvary was of little account in the eye of the mocking crowd who gathered round it ; but oh, of what infinite value was that death of shame and suffering in the eye of God! He looked on it, and saw His law honoured, His justice satisfied. It showed the glory of His holiness, the riches of His mercy, sin condemned and the sinner saved. That lifeless form might be taken down and hidden in the sepulchre, and in the eyes of men its burial was but like any other, ashes to ashes, dust to dust ; but, behold those heavenly watchers at the door, that light within, that living Saviour coming forth as the resurrection and the life ! And oh ! how precious ought this sacrifice of God's own Son to be in our esteem. It was the ransom price of man's redemption, and yet to how many does it seem of no account. If we are rejecting it because willing to live in sin, if we despise the blessings for which that blood was freely given,

we must be held as saying that the death of Christ is nothing more to us than the common death of man. We are “treading under foot the Son of God, and counting the blood of the covenant an unholy thing,” scattering the ashes instead of gathering them.

II. The manner in which applied. In order to teach the people that death was the fruit of sin, all who in any way came in contact with it were held to be defiled. Wherever one had died, as in a tent, the place and all within it was polluted, every open vessel, and every person that entered it. In this case the Israelite was separated from his kith and kin as if a taint were upon him ; he could not take part in the worship of the tabernacle, he was compelled to live by himself without the camp, till he was freed from his defilement.

This was done by a solemn act of purifying. A portion of these holy ashes was mixed with pure spring water, and a bunch of hyssop dipped in the water. With this the person was sprinkled twice on the third day, and on the seventh day after his separation, and then he could return into the camp and mingle with his brethren. “These things are an allegory.” The presence of death in any form was polluting. That body that lies in yonder tent may be that of some aged saint, just gone to Abraham’s bosom, come to his grave in a full age, like a shock of corn fully ripe, or that of some sweet gentle child who had just sighed out its last innocent breath on its mother’s breast ; but whether it was the ripe or the green that was gathered, that death, though a blessing to the departed, casts a blight and shadow on those that remain. Death is the image of sin. Every tear of sorrow, every cry of suffering,

every groan of anguish brings it before us ; but oh how bitterly do we feel what an evil thing it must be when the light is darkened in the dwelling, some pleasant voice is hushed, some warm heart is stilled for ever, and all that is left of that which was as part of our very being, is but a shell of earth, a mouldering heap of dust.

Sin itself is death, spiritual death, a separation from God, the source of life. Wherever it is it leaves the stain, and breathes the taint of pollution in the eyes of a holy God. The bleeding body of Abel was not so hideous a sight as the face of Cain. Our human nature, because thus defiled, is the body of sin, and death, the evil thing, creeps and winds into our secret heart, and clings to our inward thoughts ; and those actions which may seem to ourselves and others pure are dead works, the poison-taint is on them. How is this deep, this cleaving, this engrained defilement to be radically cleansed ? The only means of cleansing was typified to Israel. The holy *ashes* mingled in the running water shadowed forth the atoning death of Christ, applied by the living Spirit of grace to our polluted souls, (a small quantity would suffice the abiding efficacy of the atonement.) And if these ashes sprinkling the unclean, sanctified to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, the blood of sprinkling, purge our conscience from dead works. Thus only can guilt be washed out from the *conscience* ; not only sin forgiven, but the heart inwardly purified from its stain. It is easy to go through some form of outward purifying, like the pharisaic whitewashing of the sepulchre, easy to appear fair and spotless in the eyes of men, but how often does conscience utter its condemning voice in the recesses of the soul ! It cannot be hushed into silence, its alarm cannot be stilled,

till the drops of this sprinkled blood have fallen on it, and one finds peace with God in receiving the atonement. The merits of this death must be applied, and to each personally. The Israelite might know all the forms to be observed; he might have seen others purified, he might even stand by the holy laver and dip his finger into the mystic water, but till the priest took the bunch of hyssop twigs and sprinkled it, he was not clean. It is not a knowledge of the means that saves, but an actual and personal application of the merits of the Saviour's death to us. How wonderful that the Holy One of God should have entered under the roof of this earthly tent where man lay dead in sin; should have touched this polluted soil, and breathed this poisoned air; should have laid His hand on the leprous and unclean, and crowned His love by pouring out His life-blood to atone and to purify. All this we may know, but if that blood has not been sprinkled on us, we are still in our misery and vileness, joined to the congregation of the dead, not written among the living in Jerusalem, and having no place among the ransomed, purified, white-robed worshippers who, with loving hearts, and willing hands, and joyful voices serve the living God. If we are, let us bless God for the provision made for our perfect cleansing, and avail ourselves of it by constant application. Even if redeemed by the blood of Christ, how often are we sinning against grace so rich, and love so unspeakable. We need daily cleansing; let us come to the fountain which is opened—the laver of the sanctuary. Wash me every whit, not my head only, nor my feet, but my mind and heart. "Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin." This might be set forth

by the sprinkling being twice repeated, the second time being the seventh day, or the Sabbath, as if to show that the sanctification of the Christian will not be perfected till the week of this earthly toilsome life is over, and the everlasting Sabbath begins. Till then we need daily purifying from daily defilement, and he is holiest who lives nearest to Jesus, who comes oftenest to the blood of sprinkling, which speaketh better things than that of Abel.

To those not brought nigh by this blood—mark the results of despising this ancient rite, outward and carnal though it was. He on whom this guilt lay was cut off from the congregation of the Lord, severed from all the blessings, hopes, and heritage of Israel, a doomed and branded man.

There was wilful and deliberate guilt in neglecting the means which the God of Israel had appointed. He might employ others, but all was unavailing if he did not use these. And, brethren, it matters not by what means men seek to save themselves if they despise the great salvation. In proportion to its greatness is the greatness of their guilt and the greatness of their ruin. It is a solemn thing to hear these words, “Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” This is Heaven’s message of peace. To despise this is to tear up God’s handwriting of grace, and throw its fragments into the face of the Majesty of heaven. To devise some expedient of your own, to trust to some surface purifying, is like Naaman, who preferred Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, to all the waters of Israel. You are in sight of the sacred stream, you hear the sound of its waters that flow through

from the upper springs in the sanctuary, go not to other streams that flow from earthly fountains, but wash in this and be clean. Ask God to show you the foulness and deadness of this plague of sin, the evil of the heart, the defilement of the life, that this may be the cry of your stricken spirit, “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean ; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.”

VII.

“By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises, offered up his only begotten son. Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from whence also he received him in a figure.”
—HEB. xi. 17-19.

IN the life of Abraham there stand out prominently three great periods, in which his true character was clearly revealed, and the strength of the religious principle that sustained him fully tested.

The first was being summoned to forsake his native country and his father's house, to break the strongest earthly ties and follow out into the wide unknown world the leadings of a hand unseen. What his manner of life had been amid those tents of the Chaldean shepherds, where he had grown to manhood, we know not. It is enough to know that the call was abrupt and unlooked-for. It must have deranged and unsettled all his plans of life, it must have been a sudden and violent wrench from much that had become through habit a part of his living self, yet without a moment's hesitation he obeyed, “and went out, not knowing whither he went.” This was faith's obedience.

The second was the announcement of the birth of a child, who was to be the heir of the covenant, through whom its

blessings and its promises were to be transmitted to a remote posterity ; his believing, contrary to all likelihoods and all appearances, that because God has said it, it shall be ; fully persuaded that what He had promised He was able to perform, and his waiting with unshaken confidence year after year for its fulfilment. This was faith's patience.

The third, in one sense the most strongly marked of all, was the command to take this child of promise, who had now grown to maturity, and offer him in sacrifice. A command so startling, so peremptory, so seemingly opposed, not only to his own expectations, but to all the solemn assurances of God, that it would have seemed but natural to have asked some explanation before yielding compliance. Yet as promptly as he had taken up his pilgrim's staff long years before, and left his childhood's home behind him, he now goes forth on his mournful journey, steadfastly sets his face to the place where his beloved and innocent Isaac is to die. This was faith's submission.

And we have the apostle's comment on this crowning illustration of the patriarch's crowning grace in the words before us. He unveils and interprets the hidden working of his soul, shows us the secret spring that moved his life and made its outward acts point so true and answer so promptly to the regulating will of God, as the brazen index shows by its sharp and faithful shadow the exact position of the sun in the heaven.

The apostle at the outset has given a definition of faith —it “is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen ;” but one example like this is better than many definitions. Here we have the abstract idea clothed in flesh and blood ; it is no longer faith, but a believing

man of like passions with ourselves, acting, thinking, waiting, suffering, obeying. The same godly, patient, self-denying, and in the end victorious and blessed life, he lived in his time long ago, we are to live in our time. However much the outward complexion of things may have changed, the spirit is to be the same. “The fashion of this world passeth away, but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.” The actings of Abraham in this supreme crisis of his life are designed to have a continual and immediate bearing on our own.

I. The fact of his trial. “He was tried.” His had been a life of trial, bravely borne, and, as it might have seemed, happily surmounted. He had never looked for a settled rest or heritage here; his whole course of life, sojourning in the land of promise as in a strange country, a dweller in tents, removing to and fro, confessed that he felt himself a stranger and pilgrim on the earth. Yet now he might have looked for some period of repose after all he had come through. We might have expected to see the old man suffered to walk with quiet and unhindred steps down the slow and gentle slope to the grave. There is something impressive in the simplicity of the word, “it came to pass that after these things, God did tempt Abraham.” Probably it came at a time when he looked not for it, though, like one who had ever ruled his thoughts in the fear of God, it did not find him unprepared. And life never brings to any the privilege of exemption or immunity from trial. We do not speak now in the general sense of “man being born to trouble as the sparks fly upward;” we know that so it is. And without any morbid presentiments that would mar

our thankful enjoyments of present blessings, it is well, it is part of life's best wisdom, to chasten and sober the thoughts into the remembrance that it is so, for the darkest cloud has an inward glorifying brightness when the presence of the Lord is seen in it.

But even in the case of those who have been most exposed in the earlier stages of their course to the discipline of trial, and in whom we see its gracious and refining work, the children of the household trained by hard experience to meek and loving subjection to their Father's will, there is no such promise of security so long as the time of their earthly sojourning endures. The evidence of trials past, does not insure them against trials that may come. There is no stage at which they receive a safe-conduct or pass as the pledge of a free, quiet, untroubled journey to the end. It is enough that the king of the heavenly country has put into the hand of all true pilgrims a roll with these words inscribed, "When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee." "As thy day is so shall thy strength be." Until they have put off this tabernacle they must stoop oftentimes under the pressure of a burden of sin and death. God may sometimes give to his children a calm and peaceful evening of life, but not always. In one sense "the faith of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day," but the brightness pertains to the spirit, and not to the outward look and aspect of life. That may be dark and stern enough. Tribulation may have worked patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, but to the last the strength and holding power of this hope, which is the anchor of the soul, may be tried in rough tempestuous seas, and it may be in stormy weather that the vessel comes at last to the desired haven.

II. But more remarkable is the lesson taught when we look at the peculiar form of the trial. I have no doubt that the patriarch, with all the wisdom gained from the experience of a lengthened life, was quite prepared for trials befalling him such as are common to man. A personal affliction, sickness or reverses, loss of friends, reproach and injury from men, none of those things would have surprised him ; but for one kind of trial we may be sure he was not prepared. That anything could happen to threaten the safety or the life of Isaac could not have entered into his thoughts, could not have seemed to him within the limit of possibilities. His trust in God must have raised a barrier against the intrusion of such fear or vexing thought as this. There was one part of his life—how great a part we can conceive who know how his heart was knit to that child, and all his hopes wrapped up in him—which was secure from accident or change, one room in his house which the shadow of death, in his life-time at any rate, could never darken. Had he not God's own assurance that his child had succeeded to the promise, that in him all the families of the earth should be blessed, that other inheritors of the covenant should spring from him, and if he had allowed himself to fear that the thread of this precious life could be severed, might he not as well have thought that the promise of God would be made of none effect. Yet this is the strange and inconceivable form in which the trial came to him. Abraham is told to offer up his Isaac, he that had received the promises to slay on the altar his only-begotten son. It is precisely the kind of trial for which nothing could have forewarned him that God selects as a crucial test to try the temper of his servant's faith. There is one inference we gather from this

which is very obvious, it lies on the surface, that it is often in the tenderest point that our heavenly Father sees it needful to wound His children. He may call them to resign some hopes which they might have innocently cherished, or to surrender some beloved object which seemed to be one and incorporate with their living selves, one, it may be, so full of health, hope, and promise, that the thought of sickness, wasting, and death, in connexion with a life so bright and joyous, had never crossed the mind, and the idea of separation was ever far away. It is very often that from which we might have reckoned ourselves most secure that strikes us in the moment of security. The very guise in which we could never have dreamt that he would come, in that the angel of sorrow stands on the threshold. It is often that which we would never, through the very strength and sacredness of the ties that God himself has knit, have chosen for ourselves that He chooses for us, to draw closer the bonds of that higher and holier union which binds the spirit to Him. But the deepest lesson of this incident lies here, that God's children are sometimes exposed to trials which seem to strike at and assail the grounds of their faith in Himself; the very foundations of their hope in the Saviour and their trust in the promise of God may be shaken. I think those are the sorest and heaviest of all. “The spirit of a man may sustain his infirmity,” it may be a strong and effectual prop in the day of adversity, “but a wounded spirit, who can bear?” when the prop itself is loosened and trembles, all seems ready to fall into confusion and ruin. And there may be, there has been, such a seeming contradiction between the facts of our own experience and the affirmations of God's own Word. One at times may seem to have

prayed so long without any answer, or waited so wearily without any light, or borne so much without any sensible relief or lightening of the burden, that religion may seem a delusion, faith in the unseen a dream, truth to have no substance or reality, and the Divine promise a bond that may look valid in the region of mystical feeling, but is not convertible into the currency of the common world in which we are travelling between life and death. It may seem that the Bible has failed in the very point in which we have put it to the test, that religion has not done for us that which we expected it to do, or kept from us the evil from which we most wished to be exempted. In some such state of mind, distempered and perplexed, when through the mists of lowering trouble all things looked spectral and distorted, David said, "I shall one day perish by the hand of Saul," as if all the hopes he had trusted to the promise of God were foundering in that frail vessel. And even the lion-hearted Elijah, after the day of Carmel, gave way to craven fears, and prayed God that he might die. We are so apt to append to God's truth some commentary of our own, and to interpret the text by the help of our own traditions. It is not God's truth that is shaken at such a crisis, but some conclusion of your own that you have drawn from it. It is not this promise, but some human addition you have made in your own mind to the promise. For the pure simplicities of His Word lodged in our mind so often get overlaid with earthly incrustations, and by trial heated to a furnace heat,—God will cleanse them from the earthly precipitate, and show us the truth and His integrity in its native lustre and clearness.

III. A trial which Abraham endured. "By faith he

offered up Isaac." He tasted the very bitterness of death. He was not spared one pang that could give sharpness to his sufferings. At the moment that his hand was stayed he had suffered all that he could have suffered, had the knife fallen and Isaac been stretched bleeding and lifeless before him. There have been cases in which the whole dread ceremonial previous to the actual infliction of the sentence on some wretched criminal has been gone through, and at the last moment a reprieve has come, the sentence has not been executed. But the boon has come too late; in the hours of silent, forward-looking agony, nature has borne all it could bear, and now breaks under the strain without a violent blow.

That three days' journey to the mount was a slow walk through "the valley of the shadow of death," winding ever deeper into the horror and gloom of it. After Abraham heard that question from Isaac's lips as they went up the mount together, "My father, behold the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt-offering?" he had nothing worse to bear, the striking of the deadly blow could not be more terrible to him.

Now had Abraham, when he first heard the command, at variance with the spirit and letter of the promise as it seemed, fallen into utter despondency, or in his haste said, that all his hopes were betrayed, that his trust in God was a delusion, he would have done what many do. But how did he reason. God had promised that in Isaac shall my seed be called; if he is to die, the promise, as far as I can see, cannot be fulfilled. Yet God commands me to slay my son. Let me obey His command. Let me believe that He sees more than I can see. Let me trust Him with the verifying of His own words. Accounting that

He is able to raise him up even from the dead, he judges of the promise on the one hand, and the command on the other; not from appearances, not from the point of view which looks only at the present, but from that which stretches into the future, because he trusts in Him whose clear far-glancing vision sees the end from the beginning, and the end in the beginning through all the links of all the moments which intervene and unite them; Him whose wisdom and love can reconcile all seeming contradictions, and bring out of all the discords of earth and time the perfect harmonies of eternity.

This, then, was the trial and triumph of Abraham's faith; it proves what faith can bear, and what faith can do. Have we faith like this? I do not mean faith that could bear us triumphantly through such a fiery trial, but that will believe anything rather than this, that God is not the righteous, holy God that He is—the wise and loving Father that He is—that His word is not the sure and faithful word that it is, "settled in heaven, and fixed from everlasting." Abraham's faith had a deep and hidden root in the unseen, and so must ours if we are to be blessed with faithful Abraham. The only true life is one that does its daily work under the power of the world to come, one that fronts its daily trials as "seeing Him who is invisible." "He that cometh to God must believe that He is." "The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me."

In the course of God's providence there is much that must seem strange; the sin and misery that we see around us, the long triumph of evil, the slow progress of righteousness and truth to the ascendency. And within the

narrower limit of our private life and history, there is at times much that is dark and bewildering. Cares, and sorrows, and disappointments may come, and all things may seem to be against us. Have you the trust in a living God and Saviour who doeth all things well, which will enable you to say, I believe that “all things work together for good to them that love Him?” “Though he slay me, yet will I trust in Him.” A blessed attainment this; in Christ to know that God is our Father, that it is He who chooses our lot, and marks out our path—to have His word so richly dwelling in us, that there at the heart it sends its strengthening, and cheering, and purifying virtue through the life.

A faith like this can only grow and thrive through our growing in the knowledge and love of Christ. It is not the result of human teaching, but the effect of a personal trust, “No man knoweth the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son shall reveal Him.” It is the faith which springs from such a revelation as this which “works by love, and purifies the heart, and overcomes the world.” The faith which stands in the wisdom of men has but a tottering support; if our faith would endure to the end it must stand in the power of God, it must be rooted and grounded in the love of Christ.

Let us beware of setting limits to the Divine power to fulfil, in cases the most hopeless, and amid circumstances the most unpromising, either the promises or invitations of the word. We are called to speak the word of life to those dead in trespasses and sins, to stand at the door of the sepulchre and cry to the slumberer within, “Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.” Let us act as if we believed that

nothing is too hard for the Lord. Let us be strong in faith, giving glory to God, accounting that He is able by the Divine energy of His Spirit and the word to quicken the dead, and call the things that be not as though they were.

He could have raised Isaac from the dead, and out of those cold ashes on the altar made His promise spring fresh and green again. He has raised Jesus from the dead, and that is the pledge of every other gift.

Through His resurrection, spirit and life are breathed into the whole body of His word. "All the promises of God in Him are Yea, and in Him, Amen." Because He lives every word of His mouth is sure, every soul that clings to that word is safe. "He that believeth in Him, though he were dead, yet shall he live ; and he that liveth and believeth in Him shall never die."

VIII.

“Ye are complete in him.”—COL. ii. 10.

THIS is one of those wonderful sentences which so frequently occur in the life of Paul, into which, in the compass of a few simple words, is condensed a world of meaning; such a saying as that of the “unsearchable riches of Christ;” or that other, which closely resembles this, being “filled with all the fulness of God.” Speaking of Christ, the apostle had said immediately before, “In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily,” and he adds, “Ye are *complete* in Him,” filled up to the full measure of your need and capacity out of this fulness of Jesus. Just as a river that runs in a full clear current through the heart of a city yields an unfailing supply of water to each of its dwellings, and fills a vessel which a child may dip into its stream, because it gushes from its rocky cleft high up near the mountain peak where the rain-clouds gather and drip, or the perpetual snows distil their ice-cold dews into its basin. In like manner the grace that is in Christ, the fulness of the Godhead, flows into and fills up all the emptiness of the human soul. Man till he has come to God is an infinite want—Christ is an infinite resource and fulfilment for that want. Man is fallen—Christ lifts him up; he is fettered—Christ sets him free; he is guilty—

Christ is righteousness ; he is ignorant—Christ is wisdom ; he is powerless—Christ is strength. And after he has come to God, his earthly life is full of yearning and striving, of lofty reach and heavenward endeavour, the powers of an immortal nature unfolding within him and seeking their true sphere of exercise, its affections climbing upwards and seeking their true centre of rest. For all upward longings and pure aspirations there is satisfaction in Christ. In Him all noble powers find full employment, all holy affections complete repose. Man's weak, imperfect, sinful nature, conscious of its fall and seeking to rise to God again, finds in Christ all needful resources for raising it up and guiding it onwards to holiness and glory. In the second Adam the whole family of the redeemed stand faultless before God, perfect and entire, wanting nothing. They are “complete in Him.”

This is a subject so vast that we can only cast a few glances over the surface of it. It spreads far away beyond the ken of vision, and widens out beyond the grasp of thought, and we see as little of it as a child standing on the shore can see of the grand immensity of ocean.

It may prevent the strain of our remark from being too vague and general, if we avail ourselves of an illustration suggested by one of our Lord's parables. We refer to that one in which one in extremest misery and need, wounded and dying by the wayside, found a benefactor who promptly relieved him, and charged himself with the supply of all his wants. If we suppose the perishing outcast to have been a wretched slave, that this generous heart had taken him to his dwelling, ransomed him from his master, trained him for honourable service, adopted him to be a son, never ceased to care for him and plan his welfare, till from the

lowest abasement it had raised him to the highest honour and happiness, we see some of the practical aspects in which the text may be considered.

We may say that every Christian is “complete” in Christ as regards the ground of his calling, his ability for service, the thoroughness of his training, the security of his hope, and the certainty of his final sanctification and blessedness.

I. Ye are “complete in Him,” in regard to the *ground of your calling*. We refer to the new relation into which every fallen child of Adam is brought to God when he looks in his guiltiness and estrangement to Jesus, and receives salvation at His hands, the altogether new character in which he stands before God when the guilt of his sin is taken away by that cleansing blood of His, and the Father beholds him in his nakedness and defilement clothed with the spotless righteousness of His Son. There was a fearful reality in the spirit’s former state of misery, and darkness, and condemnation, in its bondage to sin, in its proud self-will, and enmity, and distrust, in its dislike of Him and His law, which is at eternal variance with sin. It might be long unconscious of this, but in a better hour it came to see it. There was the breathing of a new life into the spirit, the dawning of a new light into the mind, in which the obscuring mist of evil passed away and it saw things clearly. Then it looked for the first time upon the face of Christ, and saw in Him the Redeemer, and from darkness entered into light, from bondage into freedom, from death into life.

It would be a great change for some poor friendless slave to find himself rescued from the grasp of the op-

pressor, and by being ransomed set for ever beyond his reach, a complete and decisive change, a revolution in his whole life and character. And it is a change as spiritually decisive and complete, a revolution reaching to the depth of the nature, and therefore far more marvellous, when one is lifted up in Christ to a firm and stable hope, when one stands no longer on the ground of what he deserves, but of what Christ has done, so that believing I can say, "Surely in the Lord I have righteousness and strength." The suffering He endured was for me, the obedience He rendered was for me, in His death I died, in His resurrection I rose, in His life I live. Once afar off, I am brought nigh by the blood of Christ. Once an alien and a stranger I am a fellow-citizen with the saints and of the household of God. Accepted in the Beloved, the Father calls me son, and the Spirit of Adoption draws from my spirit the filial cry, Abba, Father. All things are mine, for Christ is mine. In Him I am "complete" as regards the measure of my privileges and the reality of my calling. The title-deed and charter of my sonship is held in the hand and ratified by the blood of Christ, signed with the Father's name, and sealed with the Spirit's seal.

II. Ye are "complete in Him," as regards *ability for service*. We are to bear carefully in mind the *end* of the Christian calling—not as if it consisted simply in our being set free from condemnation and placed in a state of safety, but as setting before us a clear and definite work to which our life is to be devoted. In the case of the ransomed slave the least that could be expected of him would be that he should devote himself to the service of his benefactor. And if it is a higher honour to which every re-

deemed man is raised by Christ, is it not a higher service to which he must hold himself called? “Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light.” It will be the first inquiry that starts to the lips of every one whose heart thrills with the gratitude of salvation, “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” The duty is pointed out, the yoke we must take upon us, the cross we must bear, the place to be occupied, the work to be done. The Master assigns to each of His servants his special post, his special work in the household. And that which may be allotted to us is that we might naturally shrink from. We would fain choose another place and another kind of service; the spirit may be willing, but the flesh weak. But here shines out for our encouragement the blessed truth, “Ye are complete in Him.” The command to serve holds the promise that you will be thoroughly furnished to render good service, the summons to fight that you will be fully supplied with arms of celestial temper to war a good warfare. Ye are “complete in Him” for guidance in perplexity and light in darkness, and help in trouble, for godly wisdom to discern the path of duty, for godly decision to walk in it, for the trust and patience and constancy of spirit that will enable you to persevere till your course is finished, your warfare fought, your work done. “Complete in Him” for every call He may make on your obedience,—from the smallest offering of love a child may lay upon His altar, to the sublimest deed of self-devotion that ever apostle achieved—from the quiet midnight watch to the open witness-bearing in the broad daylight glare of the world—from the help you

need for life's hourly cares and trials, to the calm heroic strength that bears unshrinking the agonies of a fiery martyrdom.

III. Ye are "complete in Him" as regards *thoroughness of training*. In the case of an ordinary household a wise father, looking forward to the place in the world his children have to fill, will study the bent of character in each and watch his growing capacities, and adapt his training accordingly.

Suppose that his children are born to a princely name and station, we would expect that their education would be more careful, more wisely discriminating, in proportion to the influence they are one day to wield. This is the theory; but how seldom does the practice in actual life come up to it! Of how few can it be said even in an earthly sense that they have had a complete training for the business of everyday life! The state of the Christian here, while one of active service, is one of preparation for a higher service hereafter. He is while on earth like a royal ward trained in seclusion in a bleak and distant province of his father's empire, learning by hardships and lowliness the stern well-wearing virtues that shall fit him at the proper time to adorn his station, and to be the brightest example in the highest place. He is too precious in the sight of God, his destinies are too splendid and illustrious, to be left without a careful discipline, without wholesome nurture, without a thorough education of the spirit. This throws light on the whole mystery of trial in its complex action and infinite diversities. It is to have its "perfect work," it is to be contemplated in the light of its salutary bearings on their future life. They will be

thoroughly and completely trained by Him who “though He were a Son yet learned obedience by the things which He suffered.” There are many evil dispositions and tendencies which only sharp affliction can prune and extirpate, many strong and needful graces which only the bracing air of adversity can foster and mature. The character must be formed and moulded on all sides to its complete symmetry and beauty, the precious are kept in the glowing furnace till all its dross is purged away. Every trial is but refining the spiritual nature that it may more brightly reflect the Saviour’s image. As every movement of the hand that cuts a diamond is perfecting one of those many facets which shiver the rays of light into sparkling tints and gleams, each as it comes, and while it lasts, is appointed in its form, regulated in its measure, exactly tempered and adjusted with a view to the ultimate result. Thus “now for a season if need be, they are in heaviness through manifold temptations ; that the trial of their faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.”

IV. Ye are “complete in Him,” as regards the *security of your hope*. Amid the difficulties of his service, and the hardships of his training, this is eminently needed by the Christian, something that will lift him above the depressing influence of the present, and keep his spirit erect, buoyant and bright within, when the prospect without may be dark and lowering. In all earthly work or suffering, hope is needed to sustain and cheer the spirit, otherwise the work becomes a heartless and hateful drudgery, and the suffering settles down into the gloomiest

ness and horror of despair. If “hope deferred maketh the heart sick,” hope crushed or extinguished breaks the heart, pierces it with a deadly wound.

But what earthly hope can breathe such a spirit into one for patient labour or hard endurance, as that which animates and upholds the Christian as he goes on the rugged path of duty, following meekly in the steps of Christ, like Him bearing his cross without help or sympathy from men, one whom the world knoweth not, even as it knew not his suffering Lord before him? What hope can bring the distant so near and make the future so bright as this, that all unworthy though he be, he has a place in the Father’s family and the Saviour’s heart, that even now he is the son of God, and an heir of the kingdom, an anointed king and priest of eternity, wearing for a time a strange disguise, yet with the blessed assurance in his heart, that, “though it doth not yet appear what he shall be, when He, who is his life, shall appear, he shall be like Him,” and appear with Him in glory. What strength in weakness, what consolation in sorrow, what inward peace and rest in the midst of changefulness and trouble is not such a hope fitted to impart? Other hopes may end in disappointment and humiliation, but this hope “maketh not ashamed,” for it springs out of the love of God shed abroad in the heart by the Spirit of life and truth. And surely the heart that enshrines this heavenly treasure may rejoice and be very glad; once illumined by this light within it may be happy even in tribulation, for it never shines more brightly than in dark and cloudy days, as the fire on the hearth never seems to send forth such a kind and genial glow as when you sit by it listening to the shriek of the winter wind, or the rush of the heavy rain.

And more than this, the hope of the believer has a direct and essential bearing on his spiritual progress, “Every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself even as He is pure.” The very hope of being with the Saviour hereafter is the very strongest of all motives, the noblest of all incentives to the heart that truly loves Him, to press after a closer resemblance to Him here, to be becoming more and more what He would have it to be in following after that holiness without which no man shall see the Lord.

V. Ye are “complete in Him” as regards *the certainty of your final sanctification and blessedness*. The end of faith is the salvation of the soul in its complete deliverance from the taint and blight of sin, and as the seed contains in embryo the full-grown and perfect tree, the germ of faith contains the perfect beauty of holiness. From the first step to the last the progress of the believer onwards to the consummation of his spiritual being is guarded and settled by every security that God’s promise can give, and His power redeem. “Whom He did predestinate, them He also called; and whom He called, them He also justified; and whom He justified, them He also glorified.” Once His saving hand is laid on our fallen nature, it will never let it go till it has raised it to the height of sinless perfection, the full stature of its spiritual manhood, in a thorough transformation into His image. This is the end of their calling, it is a “calling unto holiness;” the end of their service, “it is one of holy conversation and godliness;” of their training, it is that they may be “partakers of His holiness;” of their hope, it is “to purify them as He is pure.” To this end, amid conflicts and temptations, perils

and hindrances, fightings without and fears within, they are slowly advancing. Through His help they can persevere, in His strength they can resist and overcome. Crucified with Christ, they die to sin ; partakers of His resurrection-life, they live unto righteousness ; members of His body, they are visibly changing into the likeness of their Head ; through His indwelling Spirit they are becoming more spiritual in heart, and mind, and will, and so more meet for the inheritance of the saints in that light into which at last they shall enter and behold Him face to face. Then finally and for ever they are “complete in Him,” partakers of His peace, His joy, His glory ; and His joy and glory are complete in them, when He sees of the travail of His soul and is satisfied ; when He listens to the burst of praise that wells up from the great congregation of the saved, the royal priesthood set in their shining ranks round the throne, beginning that high chant of adoration which thenceforward shall unceasingly resound through the temple that is eternal in the heavens. “Light is sown for the righteous,” even now the heavenly seed is hidden beneath the mould, but will spring up and wave in golden luxuriance at the harvest season of glory in the “manifestation of the sons of God.” Then His image shall gleam forth in each in undimmed clearness and unsullied beauty, and the “righteous shall shine with the brightness of the sun in the kingdom of the Father.” It is to this blessed consummation that grace now lifts up and bears onwards each of the suffering, striving sons of God. Already in the certainty of its fulfilment each is “complete in Him.”

What then, if these things be so, should the life of every Christian be, but a constant endeavour to realise this

truth, to act upon it, to live up to the full measure of the hope and strength it is designed to inspire? “To me to live is Christ.” In Him is all the fulness that can meet my necessities; let me look *into* myself to know how infinite they are, *out of myself* to know how inexhaustible is the supply. In Him are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, of strength and patience, of holiness, of comfort and joy. These are in Him that we may receive out of that fulness—have we learned to avail ourselves of this resource, to apply to Him in our hourly need? When there was no bread in the land, the people crowded to the granaries of Pharaoh—Joseph was there. How willing was he to bestow out of that store on all!—how much more on his own brethren!—how much more on Benjamin his own mother’s son! It is your Elder Brother who is over the house of God. He has the keys to open all its treasures. He has the heart to give, He never turned one suppliant away, nor spoke roughly to one. The famine is always sore in this weary land of our pilgrimage, but in the “Father’s house there is bread enough and to spare,” in the Saviour’s heart there is love and sympathy for all the woes and wants of a sinful world.

Ye are “complete in Him” for each day and each duty. What service may you not willingly undertake when He says, “Be strong in the grace that is in Me?” What trial may you not patiently endure when He says, “Fear not, for I am with thee?” Leaning on Him who is meek and lowly enough to let the feeblest lean on Him, every yoke is easy, and each burden is light.

If ye are “complete in Him,” surely He deserves a complete trust, a complete love, a complete obedience, a firm

cleaving to Him, a continual abiding in Him so as to draw forth into your hearts that vital influence through which the spirit lives and grows.

What a poor and stunted thing is life till it has come to find its grand aim and living hope in Him ! cleaving to the dust instead of growing up to its full ripeness and maturity in bringing forth fruit to God. What a wretched thing is life without an aim even in regard to the concerns of time ! how blank, wasted, unprofitable, so that men pity and despise one who is ever planning but never doing. Yet how common is this in regard to the concerns of eternity ! How many a life we see full of endeavours broken off, resolutions never carried out, peopled with airy visions, with wishes that never settle into clear and healthy realities !

Is not this the life that some here may have been leading till now ?

A good man's life is a garden fenced and tilled, set with plants of vigorous nature and useful kind, fruitful in every good work ; but many a life is a burial-ground, where dead and mouldering plans are hidden out of sight, and tombstones stand carved with mournful epitaphs, and the grasses of past autumns grow rank on the grave of early promise and departed hope.

Begin to live now, and live to God. It is high time to awake out of sleep, to be done with dreams and intentions, and to throw the whole energy and earnestness of that soul into which God has breathed an immortal life into the only work worthy of it—the working out of your salvation. Light has come into the world, light enough to show you the work to be done, and the strength in which you are to

do it. Let it not be your condemnation that you turn away from that light, lest for you it should cease to shine, and the shadow of an endless night settle down upon you ; outcasts in the universe, rejecters of the Saviour, strangers to God.

IX.

“Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass. Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him.”—Ps. xxxvii. 5-7.

THERE is often a difficulty in determining the precise period of David’s life at which some special psalm might be written. A man’s life is frequently told in his writings, and the wish to connect each of these sacred hymns with some passage in his chequered life, some aspect of his varied experience, is natural and innocent. But where this is impossible, we may be sure that had anything important depended on it, the information would not have been withheld.

There is no such difficulty in regard to the psalm before us. We have his own testimony to the fact that it was composed towards the close of his life, and this stamps its solemn words, its wise and weighty counsels, with a special value. “Days should speak, and the multitude of years should teach wisdom.” When the almond-tree is in blossom, when we see the honoured head of one who has long walked in the ways of righteousness silvered over by time, we come to it hoping to gather the rich and mellow fruit of experience. We are always prepared to listen with respect to the counsels and warnings of hoary hairs. They

have had long acquaintance with the world—they have made full proof of it—they have seen it on all its sides—they are soon to leave it—they can speak with authority—they will speak *then*, if ever they have spoken, with truth. And so we must all feel that there is a peculiar impressiveness in the testimony which the psalmist leaves on record as he reviews the eventful career which is drawing to a close, when he tells us he had seen many things in his time, but one thing he had not seen, “I have been young, and now am old, yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.” And again, as the thought comes over his mind of the dangers that encompassed his youth and early manhood, when the cause of truth and vital godliness in Israel seemed to hang on the brittle thread of his own persecuted life, and his bitter enemy was Israel’s anointed king, or in later times when he was a fugitive from his capital and his own son was the tool of false and cruel men leagued against his father’s crown and life, is there not a strangely emphatic force when he tells us of one thing he *had* seen,—“I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay-tree; yet he passed away, and lo, he was not, yea, I sought him, but he could not be found.” Saul, Ahithophel, Nabal, Absalom, where are they now? “Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace.”

In this light, then, let us set the admonitions of the text, the Proverbs of David, we may call them, pithy maxims which Solomon must have often heard from his aged father’s lips, for we find in his Proverbs distinct echoes and repetitions of the words. They are to be regarded as containing the essence of a rich experience, the

ripened results of spiritual wisdom drawn from a devout study of the ways of God and shrewd observations of the ways of man.

In concentrating our thoughts for a little on these words, looking up to Him who is the Giver and Teacher of all true wisdom to man, it will clear our way to a better understanding of their import if we notice at the outset,—

I. Who those are to whom the words are specially addressed. The Bible contains many kind and gracious words even for those who are far from God, and not yet members of His holy family,—words of warm and loving invitation, of cordial welcome, of tenderest pity and hope. But I do not think that the words before us are addressed to such. I do not feel that it would be right to say to one manifestly living under the power of ungodliness, “Delight thyself in the Lord : rest in the Lord : and wait patiently for Him.” At least, this would not be the first thing one would say. You would feel it necessary to begin further down, nearer the rudiments of saving faith,—to pitch the strain of appeal in a lower key, for surely some deep spiritual trouble must precede this spiritual joy, some bitter searchings and strivings of heart must come before His quiet and patient rest. At the inmost heart of all delight, dependence and repose in God, is faith—the knowledge of God in a new relation to us through the great redemption, the drawing near to him as sinners pierced and stricken with the sense of guilt, yet casting themselves on His pardoning mercy in Christ, and realising His frank forgiveness, His perfect reconciliation, His welcoming and embracing Fatherhood. These graces of filial trust and confidence which we are encouraged to cherish, have their

roots deep down in the soul, and in a great change which it must have undergone. Where the germ of vital faith is not, we cannot expect these peaceable fruits of righteousness to be. How can one whose whole endeavour is to keep the thought of God out of his heart, and who is happy so long as he succeeds in doing so, understand what is meant by *delighting* in God ? You speak to him in an unknown tongue, in the new language which can only be interpreted by the new mind, and is only intelligible to the new heart—that language whose alphabet the new creature learns when the Spirit of adoption draws from its lips the first cry of the blessed life, *Abba, Father.*

In the first interview which Jesus had with Andrew and his friend when they overtook Him one afternoon on the way, and said, “Where dwellest thou ?” and He said, “Come and see,” inviting them to His own poor dwelling, where they “abode with Him that day, for it was about the tenth hour”—it is not likely that He spoke to them as He did afterwards in His discourse the night before His death, when they knew Him better, and could more fully enter into the mysteries of grace ; and to those who have not yet learned the secret of this spiritual trust and gladness, we would not say, “Rest in the Lord, and delight thyself in Him,”—but, Come and see, make trial of that faithfulness in which you can rest, that love in which you can delight, and out of the sense of His redeeming mercy, there will grow these high and rare attainments of the Christian life—a perfect trust in the Father’s unerring wisdom, a perfect gladness in His unclouded favour. “Oh taste and see that the Lord is good.” Set yourselves honestly to seek, and uprightly to serve, and “the work

of righteousness will be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever."

We may now be in a better position to consider—

II. The special duty of God's children in times of difficulty, trial, and carefulness. They are 1st, To "commit their way unto Him;" and 2d, "To rest quietly in Him." These two things are closely connected, linked together by a clasp of gold.

"*Commit thy way unto the Lord.*" By the *way* is meant the whole of one's case at any time of special need, the whole burden of anxious and vexing thoughts which may weigh down the spirit. To "*commit the way unto God*" is to carry our case to Him, and by a prayerful appeal to give over into His hands the entire disposal of our lot. The Hebrew word is very forcible, "roll" thy way upon the Lord, as one weary with carrying a heavy load would gladly transfer it to the shoulders of a friend willing and better able to bear it,—as a child tasked beyond his little strength in bearing a burden, should he meet his father in the way, would very readily resign it to him.

We must be very careful, however, not to limit the application of this duty to special trials or great occasions of life. It is to be not an occasional act, but an all-pervading habit, a condition of the mind; not a painful effort, but a spontaneous movement, as free and natural as our constant respiration. It is meant to be for all times, for all circumstances, for all employments, for plain and homely and every-day life, with its little vexations and its commonest duties. God may now and then make a sudden and abrupt demand on our strength to bear, our patience to wait, and

then we *must* commit our way unto Him. But we need not look out for special occasions—occasions enough will come to us as often as the day comes with its duties, and the blessed lesson is not learned fully until we look up to Him at every moment, and carry the thought of Him into every scene and every occupation.

It seems easy to admit, but oh how hard is it to act habitually in the belief, that God is to His people all, infinitely more than all, that friend can be to friend, that father can be to child ! He often does lay burdens on them which seem to be above their strength, some yoke of service, some cross of suffering, some weight of perplexity, some discipline of daily trial from which they could wish to be exempted. If it were not so, if it were not felt to be heavy, wearisome, oppressive, it would not be a burden ; just as affliction before it could come exactly as we would choose it, were the choice given us, would lose all the grievousness and smart which make it *affliction*. Well, God sees it right to lay this upon you ; you must bear it ; you feel that it is too heavy for you to bear ; you begin to think that yours is a harder than the common lot ; that you are singled out as a mark for those arrows that are ever flying into the crowded ranks of men ; that there is no use in struggling and striving any longer ; that all things are against you, that you may as well lie down and die. But be hushed, thou doubting, fainting spirit, there is a hand to help you and a voice to cheer. At this moment the angel of patience stands beside you, and whispers, “ Commit thy way unto the Lord ! ” Do not think and speak as if He had imposed this burden and retired into a secret place where you cannot follow Him, where He is looking unconcerned on you and your woe. He is near to

all who call upon Him, a refuge in danger, a strength in weakness, a very present help in trouble.

When Jesus was well-nigh fainting under the burden of His cross, Simon of Cyrene, coming out of the country, passed by, and the soldiers transferred it to him. Never have any of His disciples passed along the Dolorous Way bearing their cross, but Jesus coming out of the better country has been there. For once that His cross was borne by a disciple for Him, times without number has He borne the crosses of His suffering people, yes, as often as a cross has been heavy and a Christian feeble.

It may be asked, How is it that we are to roll our burden on the Lord? By an act of prayer. “Be careful for *nothing*: but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.” There is a beautiful connexion between the *nothing* and the *everything*. We need be over-careful for nothing so long as in everything we have the resource of prayer. We have a memorable example in the history of the good King Hezekiah in what he called his “day of trouble and rebuke and blasphemy.” He received the insulting letter from the envoy of a haughty heathen conqueror. He read it, and then he went up into the house of the Lord, and spread it before the Lord and prayed. And having done so, his heart was lightened, he had rolled his burden on the everlasting arms, and in due time God “brought forth His righteousness as the light, and His judgment as the noon-day.” Only let us see to it that it is a *righteous* desire we have when we go with our burden to God. Not our present ease and comfort; not the wish to be rid of it at any cost; not the wish to be rid of it at all, should God see it needful to continue it. The committing our way to Him

is not only the prayer to be brought out of trouble, nor even this *chiefly*, but first and chiefest to be kept nearer to Himself in bearing it, to be helped to bear it as long as it is His will it should last, to be content and even glad to bear it until it has yielded by His blessing its full measure of spiritual good. The wish that has most power in the Christian's mind, and that rises soonest to his lips in prayer, must be that the will of God even in his sanctification may be fulfilled, and that trial may have its perfect work in him to this highest and most blessed end.

2. With this is closely linked the admonition to "rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him." Take the case of one who with a load above his strength has been toiling some steep and broken path, when suddenly he finds it lifted off and transferred to another whose strength he knows to be more than equal to the task, and in whose sympathy he can securely trust. What would his feeling be but one of perfect rest, and calm reliance, and joyous freedom as they went on their way together? And such is the blessedness of rolling our care upon the Lord,—in weakness we are resting on superior strength, in perplexity and doubt we are resting on superior wisdom, in all times of trial and hard service we can stay ourselves on the assurance of His perfect sympathy. The literal meaning of the word "rest" is "*be silent*" towards the Lord. With the eye fixed on Him let all unbelieving thoughts be stilled, such thoughts as rise and rankle in the querulous spirit when it sees only its troubles, and not God, in them, when the mists of earth hide from its sight the eternal stars of heaven. Then like Jacob it may say morosely, "All these things are against me;" or like Elijah despondingly, "It is enough, now, O Lord, take away my life;" or like Jonah

fretfully, "I do well to be angry." In regard to all such dark and unbelieving suggestions, the heart is to keep silence, to be still and know that He is God ; silent as to murnuring, but not silent as to prayer, for in that holy meditative stillness, the heart turns to commune with Him. What is "resting in God" but the instinctive movement and upward glance of the spirit to Him ; the confiding all one's griefs and fears to Him, and feeling strengthened, patient, hopeful in the act of doing so.

It implies a willingness that He should choose for us, a conviction that the ordering of all that concerns us is safer in His hands than in our own. It seems easy to say this, but how difficult it is to act up to it ! Could we have had the disposal of our own lot, how far would we have been from choosing what God has chosen for us ! and yet what Christian mind would admit the thought that His choice has not been the wisest and the best ? How often would evil have come out of the good we longed for ! How often has good come out of the evil we shrank from ! as in the Eastern story of the leaden and golden caskets, where the golden casket that was grasped so eagerly, was found when opened to be filled with ashes, and the other that looked so worthless proved to be full of the richest jewels.

Had we been left to trace out our own path through life, how straight and easy would we have made it ! no windings, no dark places, no cross-roads, no arduous ascents. It would have run clear and fair along a pleasant and sunny level ; but where would have been the discipline of trust and lowliness, the careful watch and the guarded walk, the pilgrim weariness and the pilgrim rest, the bracing air and the wide prospect, the looking down into

valleys dim with mist out of which we have climbed, the looking up to calm bright summits flushed with ethereal hues and illumined with the light of heaven? Thankful may we be that a wise hand has traced it for us, making it steep that it might lead upwards, and rough that we might seek a helping hand. And so it is that in struggling on the Christian wayfarer is ever rising higher, and now and then reaches some happy landing-place, whence a wider prospect opens, some mount of vision, whence he has a nearer glimpse of the bright foundations of the Heavenly City, to whose shining gates, to the level of whose golden streets, all these upward difficult ascents of time are leading the pilgrim children of eternity.

We close with a few practical remarks:—

1. Our "*resting patiently*" in the Lord, applies only to the trials which He sends, not to the troubles which even Christians often make for themselves. By our carelessness or rashness, our cowardice or inconsistency, our grasping at some present good or shrinking from some dreaded trial, at the sacrifice of principle, we often bring ourselves into difficulty or danger. We may be induced to make some sinful compromise for a worldly advantage, we may rashly venture into the temptations of worldly society, or when some unwelcome duty or painful trial is set before us, our concern may be how to escape from it rather than go onwards in the strength of God to meet it, and thus conscience is ensnared, and the Spirit is grieved, and we pierce ourselves through with many sorrows.

There is a difference between the burdens that come in the way of duty, and those that come through our wandering into other ways. We can roll the one upon the Lord,

but with the other our punishment may be to be left to bear them long, and to be bruised in bearing them. As we have bound them on with our own hands, we may be left to carry them many a dark day in our own strength. And great searchings of heart, bitter tears, and sharp pangs of repentance must be ours before we feel them lifted off, before we can return to our quiet rest.

2. The duty here enjoined is to be carried through all our life. We all admit that *patient* waiting is needed for the great trials of life, but may not acknowledge so readily that it is needed as much for little, daily, commonplace vexations. But these are as much a test of Christian principle as the other.

The oft-recurring cares and annoyances of a domestic, social, and business kind, that spring up in one's daily path, are perhaps the hardest trials of patience. How much of the unhappiness of life springs out of this, the irritability caused by our wincing under petty troubles. The constant buzzing and stinging of a swarm of insects would throw a man into fever, and be harder to bear than a sudden sharp pain like a sword-cut. And religion, if it is genuine, will teach us to bear these with a quiet, gentle, forbearing, even, and cheerful mind—it will soothe the feet and heal the fester and smart of the minor ills of life. It is not to be kept in reserve for grand occasions—it is to be the vital spirit of life, circulating with genial warmth through all its parts and to all its extremities, as the blood in the body, as the sap that rises to the topmost branch of the tree. Christian living is not for the church or prayer-meeting only, but for the household, the market-place, the counting-house, the workshop. Our Christian faith is to be with us in our sitting in the house, and our walking by

the way. The commonest occasions of life may be made grand by the spirit you put into them.

“We need not bid, for cloister’d cell,
Our neighbour and our work farewell,
Nor strive to wind ourselves too high
For sinful man beneath the sky.

“The trivial round, the common task,
Would furnish all we ought to ask,—
Room to deny ourselves, a road
To bring us daily nearer God.”

And let us seek daily to bring Him nearer into contact with our whole life, looking upward for hourly strength in doing our hourly work, ever holding up the vessel of the heart open, that grace may trickle into it, drop by drop, from the upper springs, and keep it full.

3. This resting in God is a criterion of a man’s spiritual state. It needs a special faculty of discernment—a new sense to be opened in the soul—before our fallen nature can understand or desire it. It is no more to be apprehended by the natural mind, than shades of colour by one blind from his birth. Have you any knowledge of it? any desire for it? It may be you honestly answer, none. You have been hitherto seeking rest, but sure we are that you have found none—none that can fully satisfy, none that can steadfastly endure. You have been saying with the multitude, “Who will show us any good?” but it is as far off as ever, you have only grasped a shadow. Come and seek it here, where God stands holding it in His hands, and Christ is waiting to reach it forth to you. No true rest, no abiding good other than this can be possessed by man. He must ever seek, but can never find, till he

finds what he seeks in God. For He has framed us for Himself, and the spirit He has breathed into us is doomed to be restless till it comes to its centre of repose in Him. There is no day of rest in the service of sin. Satan has no sabbath, and gives none to his slaves. His yoke becomes even more heavy, and his bondage more hard. How different from Him whose service is freedom, whose law is love, whose yoke is easy, and whose burden is light ! Come to Him to be set free from that sin which is the cause of all misery and unrest. Believe in Him, and being justified by faith you will have peace with God. The true peace is peace of conscience ; and never can man's conscience be at peace in itself till its guilt is forgiven, till its fears are hushed and stilled through the peace-speaking blood of Atonement.

X.

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice ; and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.”—JOHN xvi. 20.

IT is touching to mark how frequently our Lord, in His farewell discourse, turns aside for a while from the great work of unfolding the mysteries of His kingdom, to speak some words of comfort to His sorrowing disciples. In that sorrow there mingled many elements of earthliness, it was far from being purely spiritual. There was in it the vague dread of impending evil, the bitterness of disappointed hopes, a painful doubt and wonder and disquietude, as if the foundations of life had been suddenly loosened beneath them by an earthquake shock, for which there was no cause. It was trouble and perplexity that mainly sprung from their unbelief, their slowness of heart to take in the true spiritual sense of the words in which He had often spoken to them of His death, and tenderly prepared them for the coming separation. The time is short, He has much to say to them, and these last precious moments are gliding swiftly by ; and yet, because He sees there is lying on their hearts, chill and heavy, the shadow of the coming trial, all the more terrible to them for its dimness and uncertainty, He suspends once and again the sublime movement of His thoughts heavenward, to drop some

blessed word of hope and consolation to them. "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." He gently rebukes their fears, assuring them of His unchanging love and sympathy, of the continual comfort and help and guidance of His spiritual presence ; in a word, seeks to point their eye above the clouds and mist that are gathering round the cross, to the rest, the joy, the blessedness of the eternal life beyond ; to elevate their hearts above the suffering and the sorrow of the present time, to the glory that is to follow. "Because I said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart ; nevertheless, I tell you the truth, It is expedient for you that I go away. Ye now have sorrow, but I shall see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you." In the words we have read, our Lord speaks in a similar strain of consolation, His words being all the more impressive by the contrast indicated between their feelings in the prospect of His departure, and those of the ungodly and unbelieving world around them ; theirs is sorrow that would be changed into gladness, the world's is gladness that would be turned into bitterness and lamentation.

I. Let us notice the simple fact of the contrast—how strange, yet how real and true it is, for it is abiding and perpetual, as clearly marked and discernible in our days as in those in which He, the Prince of Life and the Lord of Glory, was in this evil world judged and crucified. There are points in which the followers of Jesus and the men of this world can sympathise, there are joys and sorrows which, by virtue of their kindred humanity, they have in common. The "Father of lights" makes His sun to shine, and His rain to fall on the evil, and on the

good, and in the continuance of such outward gifts and blessings they can alike rejoice, as in the withdrawal or suspension of them they would alike mourn. But there is a point at which their sympathies diverge, where their thoughts, and feelings, and desires part to run in two separate and opposite channels, so that those between whom there may exist outward affinities, can no longer walk together as if they were agreed, but must draw off each to his own company. The friendship of the world is enmity to God, no man can serve two masters, no subject can be loyal to two rival princes, there is no room in the heart for two opposite and conflicting loves. “If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” Wherever the love of the Father is, there are joys and sorrows with which the world cannot sympathise.

The circumstances in which these words are spoken bring out this contrast with singular clearness and force. The distress of His disciples was caused by the thought of the parting ; the words, “ Yet a little while, and ye shall not see me,” were enough to strike anguish through their hearts, and darken them with a sense of loss inexpressible. They sorrow more than they ought to have done, still at the heart of their sorrow there was deep and devoted love to their Lord ; and at the very moment they were lamenting, the world was exulting—that very parting which they bewailed as a calamity, the world hailed as a triumph. It was the hour and the power of darkness, evil spirits and wicked men had leagued together against that Incarnate Holiness and Purity and Love that condemned them. That Light which shone in the darkness, and which those fallen souls, who loved the darkness, hated and shrank from, would soon be quenched in blood, and

trouble them no more. This seeming triumph of the world was the bitterest aggravation of the sorrow of those who loved Him. "He saved others, Himself He cannot save; let Christ the King of Israel descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe." These were taunts that must have stung their loving hearts to the quick. And when, instead of coming down, He was taken down in the darkening eventide, and wrapt in a hasty shroud, and left in the lowness and lonesomeness of the grave, buried like a "dead man out of mind," all their hopes seemed to be buried with Him there. The weight of that sepulchral stone lay on their hearts, crushing the very springs of life, and their anguish broke out in that lamentable cry, "We trusted that this had been He who should have redeemed Israel." Yet we know that this was but for a little while; after that darkness there quickly came a glorious light, the morning of the Resurrection dawned and all the darkness fled away. "Again a little while," and their sorrow was turned into joy. "Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord."

The triumph of the world had been but for a moment. That death in which they exulted was His victory over death. "Delivered for our offences, raised again for our justification." From the grave which they had closed, and sealed, and guarded, He came forth, leaving the grave-clothes folded, in glory and in majesty, as a king comes forth from the ivory palaces, all His garments smelling of myrrh, aloes, and cassia—in the white raiment of His eternal priesthood, and with the sceptre of royal power, henceforth to reign till He had put all enemies under His feet. But a "little while," and those who denied the Holy One and the Just, and killed the Prince of Life, were

to hear on the streets of their city a voice they could not silence, “Let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made this same Jesus whom ye have crucified, whom He hath raised from the dead, both Lord and Christ.”

II. But while we see in the resurrection the immediate fulfilment of the Saviour’s words, we pass on to remark, secondly, that they have a continuous never-ceasing fulfilment in the spiritual life. The disciples were to learn that the significance of this blessed promise was by no means to be exhausted by their seeing the risen Lord again on earth. It was but a brief sojourn He made before He ascended to the Father, and when the forty days were over, He vanished from their sight, He passed within the veil. Then “a little while,” and Pentecost came, with that blessed gift of the Holy Ghost the Comforter, through which they realised the fulness of the resurrection glory, and could rejoice in the spiritual presence and power of the unseen Lord. And then when they went out their several ways into the world with the message of salvation, preaching Christ and suffering for Him, when their life became a witness-bearing, and a warfare, when it had, as we know it had, its seasons of weariness, and trouble, and care, how could they have borne up under the stress of trial but for the thought, “Yet a little while and we shall see Him again, and then our sorrow shall be turned into joy;” for has He not said, “I go to prepare a place for you, and I will come again and receive you to myself. In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world,” and in me ye have peace. Ah! well may those bear the strife, the hardship, the storm, and the

sadness of the present time, who have such an inspiring hope, even the glorious appearing of their God and Saviour—the “little while” of watching, and of longing, to be followed by the brightness of that glorious coming, the gladness of that promised meeting, the long bright spaces of eternity when they shall be for ever with the Lord, stretching away beyond the bounds of this “little while” of time.

But to come more closely home to the actual daily experience of the Christian. There is much sorrow in it, there cannot but be to those who have felt the reality of sin, its guilt, its malignity and power, even though they know they have through grace been led to the source of pardon and cleansing. The sense of the mystery of evil that is in the heart, the indwelling corruption that has struck its roots so deep, their weakness if left to themselves, their continual shortcomings and swervings of heart from God, the earthliness of nature that clogs the spirit in its upward soarings, and drags it downward to the dust;—all these cannot but sadden and depress them. So long as they are in this tabernacle, they groan, being burdened. “Oh, wretched man that I am,” they must often be forced to cry, “who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” And in their daily fighting against sin, in their wrestling with temptation, in their watching and their striving against those deadly influences with which the very atmosphere they breathe is laden, they cannot but feel that the path is rugged, the service difficult, and the conflict hard. They have often cause to weep and lament when the thoughtless world around them goes on its course rejoicing, or slumbers in its pleasant dream of false security.

If it were not so, He would have told us, but He has

put a grave and stern aspect on the Christian life, He has said that the gate is strait, and the way is narrow, that if any would truly follow Him he must deny himself, and take up the cross, and bear it with patience to the end. But in the very midst of such conflicts and troubles, are there not hidden sources of hope and comfort opened up? Is there not the certain promise of grace perfected in weakness, support in trial, and help in the hour of temptation? Is it not true, that if there are sorrows which the heart only knoweth, there are joys with which the stranger cannot intermeddle? that those very sorrows, the heart-searchings of the profounder Christian experience, the trials and the chastenings that wound us in the tenderest part, are turned to results of joy? Out of the humbling consciousness of the power of sin, the Christian gains a stronger conviction and hold of the Saviour's power, a clearer view of the beauty of holiness, and a deeper trust in the completeness of His work, and His all-sufficiency to save. Out of a growing perception of His weakness there comes a simpler reliance on God's promised strength, a firmer grasp of that Almighty Hand. After the weeping for a night, when the soul has mourned an absent Lord, joy cometh in the morning, and the morning light is all the brighter for the darkness that went before. The cup of trial which was so bitter to the lips is found to have mingled and infused in it ingredients of sweet and gracious consolation. There is no desert, waste and dreary, into which God leads His children which has not its palms of shade and its well-springs of refreshing. Thus we see that our spiritual life has its graver and its brighter aspect, but that through the darker we come to discern the brighter —to learn that just as far as the pillar of cloud casts its

shadow, it sends forth light from its inner fire. Thus “tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope.” So that without tribulation hope would droop and languish, like a plant that has not soil enough to give it rooting, nor air enough to quicken it into vigorous growth. Hence the apostle takes in both aspects at a single glance. “As dying, yet behold we live ; as chastened, and not killed ; as sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing ; as poor, yet making many rich ; as having nothing, yet possessing all things.”

But we cannot doubt that the complete fulfilment of the Saviour’s farewell words is reserved for His final coming. Compared with that great manifestation of His glory, for which the Church looks and longs, this is the season of her mourning and loneliness, as on all this present time there lies the shadow of His absence. Then will come the gladness of the marriage feast,—then the unclouded vision of the King in His beauty,—she will rise out of the dust and put on her beautiful garments, with gladness and rejoicing she shall enter in. At one sight of that face all past trials and sorrows will be forgotten, all the waves of affliction that have swept over us be remembered as waters that pass away.

That is the day to which He points the gaze of every disciple. “Ye now have sorrow because I go away ; but ye shall see me again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you. And in that day ye shall ask me nothing.” No more need to ask,—peace perfected, joy fulfilled, glory in the quiet possession of the heirs of life eternal. How ought a blessed hope like this to lift the believer up above both the beguiling and the besetting influences that constantly beset him,—to take all the de-

ceitful lustre out of temptations, and to lighten the strain and pressure of present trial. What mere earthly pleasure and gain could bear that light being let in on it? What sufferings of this present time are worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us? What an incentive to watchfulness, to faithful service, to growth in holiness! For if we believe that we are the “sons of God,” if there is any gladness to us in the thought that when “He shall appear, then we shall be like Him,” then, having this hope in us, we shall be ever preparing for His coming, “purifying ourselves as He is pure.”

How touchingly are these truths illustrated and set forth in that simple rite that commemorates His death! It speaks to us of His sorrow, it reminds us how soon that sorrow was turned into joy. And pointing us to Him whom our sins have pierced, it bids us sorrow, but not as those who have no hope, for it presents Him as the “Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.” It shows us the fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness,” and invites us to lay in lowly confession and penitence our sins where that blood of sprinkling may fall upon them and take them away. We show forth at once His death and His life, and we do it as those in whom the mystery of that death and life are to have some reflection. “ Bearing about with us the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.” “It is a faithful saying; for if we be dead with Him, we shall also live with Him.” Thus we are to show forth the Lord’s death, until He come; for He lives, and because He lives we shall live also. So these memorials of His suffering are the symbols of His glory. From that tree of doom blossomed the hope of the world, the redemption of fallen

man. On that "place of a skull" we see Him with His foot on the head of death, bruising the enemy under our feet also. And looking back to that night much to be remembered, let us look forward to that day much to be thought of, much to be longed for—that solemn but blessed day when every eye shall see His sign in the firmament, and He shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on those that know not God and obey not the gospel, (their joy turned into endless wailing,) and to be glorified in His saints, their sorrow turned into endless joy.

XI.

“ And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures ? ”—LUKE xxiv. 32.

It is difficult for us to transport ourselves into the situation of our Lord’s disciples, and to understand the all but overwhelming sorrow and despondency that settled down on them when they were first brought face to face with the reality of their Master’s death. The anguish and the shameful ness of that death, as we look back upon it, are softened and diminished by the glory of the resurrection. We cannot look at His cross of suffering without seeing beside it the open and empty sepulchre that tells us “ He is not here, but is risen ” in the power of an endless life. Very different was it with them when they saw the shrouded form of Him they loved laid in its dark and silent resting place, and the stone fixed and sealed to bar the entrance. All that remained to them of their Lord left there, as it seemed, to lie in long unbroken slumber and moulder into the common dust. It may seem strange to us that no remembrance of the words in which He had so often spoken of His sufferings, and told them how His death would be followed by His resurrection, should have come into their minds, and brightened their gloomy hours with a gleam of hope. But so it was, and it shows us how

vaguely even they discerned during their master's sojourn with them the more spiritual aspects of His character and work,—how little they understood the true nature of His kingdom. Thus His death would have fallen upon them like a calamity for which they were unprepared, withering their most fondly cherished hopes, confounding all their plans, and unsettling the very foundations of their faith in God. So perplexed and crushed were they by His death that they did not expect His resurrection, and what can account for the sudden and wondrous change that converted these depressed and shrinking men into ardent and fearless witnesses for Christ, but the irresistible evidence that the Lord was risen, and the new and glorious light of truth that His death and resurrection poured upon their minds, as bearing on their own salvation and that of their fellow-men.

Amongst the larger number of the disciples, not the twelve, two are singled out as representatives of the rest in their state of mind, and as having been brought to the conviction of the reality of the resurrection in a manner different from the rest, more resembling the way in which *we* must look for the manifestation of the Saviour's presence now, whether in the saving revelation of the truth to the conscience and heart of the awakened sinner, or in the spiritual fellowship and communion His disciples may expect to enjoy in His word and ordinances.

I. The state of mind in which He found them. It might be too strong to say it was a state of utter unbelief, but it was one of doubt and uncertainty, one in which they knew not well what to believe. They speak as men from whom, when they had seen their Master die, the most precious

hope of their life was taken: "We trusted this had been He who should have redeemed Israel." Yet in these words there breathes the deepest love and devotion to their Master; there is a sacred and undying bond unites them to Him who lies in that grave. Their hearts are full of that hallowed memory, and it is their greatest relief and solace to speak of Him as they journey together on the way, every step taking them further away from the city where He died. Besides there had come to them, ere they left the city, some strange report of the sepulchre having been found deserted at early morn, of a vision of angels sitting where His body was laid, who said He was alive. Their minds were thus strangely moved and shaken—oscillating, we might say, between hope and fear—waiting in anxious suspense for some stronger evidence, groping in the dark for clearer light. And it was while they thus communed together and reasoned out of those meagre materials and gimmering remembrances of words of His spoken long before, seeking to strike some spark of hope, that Jesus himself, as a fellow-traveller who had overtaken them on the way, drew near and went with them. And in this there lies a lesson of most useful application. One of guidance and encouragement to those who, feeling they have not yet attained the firm hope and assurance and joy in believing which others have, are truly and earnestly seeking it. Where any spiritual inquiry is really awakened in the heart, whether through conviction of sin which brings the soul for the first time to feel the necessity of a Saviour, or through the love to Christ already felt which would impel it to a more devoted obedience, a more entire consecration of itself to Him, or through those experiences of trial and temptation which come so often to lead us to seek to have our hope more

surely anchored within the veil—where there is any deep and living desire springing up in the soul out of the sense of need and reaching up to Christ for its fulfilment—there is the assurance grounded on the faithfulness of the Divine promise, and confirmed by a never varying experience, that it will be met and satisfied. Wherever His presence is sought He comes manifesting Himself. The natural heart is the seat of many restless cravings; hopes that prove abortive, longings that remain ungratified, a hunger that seeks to satiate itself on that which is not bread, and a thirst that returns with greater vehemence after every effort to quench it at earth's broken cisterns and bitter springs. But every spiritual desire carries in it the promise and pledge of its own accomplishment. “Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.” “Then shall we know if we follow on to know the Lord.” It was she who came first to the sepulchre and waited longest, weeping as she stooped down and searched its gloom with eager eyes, who first saw the risen Lord. And now, while these disciples speak of Him with sorrow as one whom they have lost, yet with love unquenchable as one who gave their life all its brightness and joy, He in a moment is at their side, their companion on the way.

II. The manner in which He brought conviction to their minds.

By a single word He might have revealed Himself, as when to that early watcher at the sepulchre He said “Mary,” and she cast herself at His feet; or, as He came at evening into the midst of the disciples, saying “Peace be unto you,” and showing them His hands and His side.

But He chose to deal with them in a different and peculiar way, giving them at first no means of personal recognition, but leading them to a gradual discovery of His true spiritual glory through enlightening in the truth, not showing them so much what was, but what they would have known must have been, if they had understood the Scriptures which they professed to believe. He who spoke to them seemed a chance-met stranger, their eyes were holden that they should not know Him; but as word after word of ancient inspiration came glowing from His lips, and prophet after prophet passed before them, a long procession of witnesses to that kingly glory of the Christ that was to be reached through sufferings, that but through sufferings never could be reached, it was as if a mist had passed from their eyes—all things were beheld in a new light, and through the veil of His earthly lowliness as they remembered it, could they discern not only the light of the indwelling glory, but in the very crisis of His self-abasement, and sorrow, and weakness, as He hung, desolate and forsaken, on the cross, as He cried, It is finished, and gave up the ghost, as He was borne in the touching helplessness of death to the grave and left there—in all this they could see that which was essential to the consummation of His redeeming work. That lowest, darkest step of all was the necessary initial step to His manifest exaltation.

The crown of thorns was the mediatorial diadem, the cross was the kingly throne, the death was His victory over death, His bruising of the serpent's head and making an end of sin. But for this, they saw, and wondered that they had not seen before, He could not have been Saviour and King. They felt that, which they had deplored as the destruction of all their hopes, was in reality their crowning

evidence and fulfilment, and instead of saying, as men who had clung to a fond and delusive dream, “we trusted this had been He who should have redeemed Israel,” they could say, We know and believe that this *is* He who by His death has redeemed Israel, made atonement for iniquity, brought in an everlasting righteousness, and reconciled sinners to God. This they felt and knew before they discovered that He who was speaking to them was the Lord himself. They discerned the saving truth of His atoning sacrifice, before they discerned the fact of His actual presence and personal identity. The one was a higher knowledge, a more blessed and gladdening discovery than the other. It was attained by the same means, and in precisely the same way in which it is to be attained still. “He opened to them the Scriptures.” It was not in the light of a new revelation that they saw the Lord, but in a new light illuminating the old revelation. He did not say, Look upon my pierced hands and side, and know that I am He who was dead and am alive. That evidence would have been convincing enough, the evidence of sense. But He said, Look at what the Scriptures testify of Christ—see how they have spoken of His humiliation as a man, as much as of His honour as a king, how they have pointed to the cross not less clearly than to the crown, and shown, that through the one the way to the other lay; how every prophet in the long line of witnesses, as officers of state in some coronation march, has held aloft some emblem of His passion, all testifying that He was to come to earth to die, that His death was a sacrifice for sin, and that because He so humbled Himself, God was highly to exalt Him, and give Him a name above every name. And this was even higher evidence, for it rested, not on the warrant of sense,

but on the authority of God. It was a clearer perception, because it was a spiritual discernment of His glory as a Saviour, not a mere identification of His human personality. As He himself said to His doubting apostle, “Thomas, because thou hast seen, thou hast believed ; blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.” Once they thus knew Him, it mattered little whether or not He chose to manifest His bodily form and presence to their eyes.

Now, just as through the Scriptures He revealed His spiritual self to them before they discerned His material self, it is in the same way that He manifests Himself to His people now. It is the work of the Spirit to testify of Christ. He is the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ, the Spirit of truth to guide us into all truth. He removes a double veil ; that veil which lies on the natural mind and heart, so that the light of truth cannot penetrate its thick close folds, and that veil which lies on the page of inspiration, so that its true spiritual sense is profoundly hidden from the natural eye. In that light the spirit’s eye meets the eye of Christ ; the heart, acutely sensitive at the sight of its own sinfulness, thrills to the healing and loving words of the Saviour. That which was a dead letter becomes the truth as it is in Jesus ; guided and irradiated by the grace and love of a living person, it asks no evidence of sense, for it has the certainty of a blissful experience, the faculty of a spiritual vision, and through it, “seeing Him not, yet believing, it can rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.”

What a change from the manner in which they had known the surface truth of the Scriptures before to that in which they pierced to the very core and essence of this

truth now, when He had opened their understanding to understand the Scriptures. Suppose a man whose eyes are bandaged led into a room in which there hangs some beautiful picture with a curtain drawn over it; in order that he may see it, it is not enough that you remove the bandage, for the curtain that screens it is there, nor is it enough that you draw aside the curtain if the bandage still remains on his eyes. Both must be removed, the veil from the vision, and the veil from the canvas, ere the loveliness of the painting can flash into his soul. Even so is it with the word—the revelation of Christ—to the heart. That secret influence which blinds the mind to the word must be overcome—that deep obscurity which darkens the word to the mind must be cleared away before there shines into the heart “the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus.” Thus with open eyes we “behold wondrous things out of His law;” then with open and unveiled face beholding the glory of the Lord, we are penetrated by its influence and changed into the same image.

III. The effects of the Saviour’s discourse.—“It made their hearts burn within them.” This was the first utterance that broke from their lips in the excitement of the actual discovery. They had been so riveted by His words, that they could not think of parting with Him when they reached their destination. “He made as though He would have gone further,” but they constrained Him to remain. And then, while joining with them in their simple meal, as He took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them—whether the action recalled what they must have heard, the scene in the upper-chamber

before His death, or they saw the print of the nails—their eyes were opened, and they knew Him, and He vanished. A gladdening discovery, but it was not this that made their hearts to burn within them ; it was the spiritual discovery of Himself to the soul before they knew Him thus. With the glow and fervour of sacred emotion that His words had kindled in their hearts, there was doubtless wonder and sorrow that they should have been so slow of heart to believe, so ready to yield to despair ; gratitude and joy that out of that very death there should have come results of unspeakable blessedness, glory to the Saviour, salvation to men, love all the deeper and more ardent at the thought that they had so little understood His love, a love stronger than death, which many waters could not quench nor floods drown.

Can we say, brethren, as with these first disciples, that Christ is He whom our souls desire and love, that we have found Him precious, that He is the Saviour all our hopes cling to, the Master we wish to serve, the Friend on whose bosom we would lean. What hinders that we should not oftener go in the light and comfort of His presence ? Why is it that our fellowship with Him should be so brief and interrupted, that instead of continually walking with Him, we should lose the sense of His companionship ? these times when our eyes be holden that they should not know Him, and His voice touches no responsive chord within us ? Is it not that we are so ready to withdraw from Him—our proneness to declension and backsliding—our want of watchfulness and prayer ? so that we are not sufficiently on our guard against temptation, not habitually realising our need of dependence upon Him, and allowing our “ hearts to be hardened through the de-

ceitfulness of sin?" When such is the case, the flame of the Spirit must burn very low, and love wax cold, as a taper of light flickers and dies in a tainted atmosphere. Would we desire such a manifestation of His love as would make "our hearts burn within us?" Let us "draw near and see this great sight." Look at the cross on which He died. See the grave in which He lay. Let us think of Him, speak of Him, pray as they would have prayed if they had known then all that we know of His resurrection life and His ascension glory, "Abide with us; for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent." Let us bless Him that He has made such provision for the hallowed communion of His people with Himself, promising to manifest Himself to all who seek Him, and make Himself known in the breaking of bread. Unworthy though we are, He invites all who come in humility and faith to sit at His table. He brings them into the banqueting house, His banner over them is love. For all who renounce all other righteousness and trust, His own righteousness is provided as the garment in which they may enter. And He has promised by those simple emblems, which are memorials of His death, to seal the assurance of their forgiveness and peace—"For if, when enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life."

XII.

“Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no.”—DEUT. viii. 2.

THESE words occur in that last solemn charge which Moses delivered to the chosen people just before his death. After their long sojourn in the wilderness, they were now approaching the borders of the promised land. The Jordan alone separated them from their goodly and pleasant heritage. Behind them stretched the wide and dreary desert through which they had wandered ; before them they could see at last the green hills and plains of Canaan ; and many of them at such a time would seek to banish the recollections of the wilderness from their mind, and would fill the future with visions of peace and happiness never to be realised. Therefore it was at the moment when their foot was on the threshold of their new abode, that Moses was directed to pass in review the whole course of God’s providential dealings with them from the time of their deliverance from Egypt. He was to warn them that they had ill-learned the ends of the holy discipline under which God had kept them, if they thought that, with their settlement in Canaan, the experience of the wilderness was to pass away and be forgotten. On the contrary, that ex-

perience, earned so painfully, was to abide with them and their children for ever. The remembrance of the wilderness was to cast a solemn shadow over their entrance into the land of promise. It was to be regarded as the school in which God had trained and moulded the mind of his people. It would have been well with them and their children if they had laid seriously to heart the divine admonition, "Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness."

I. We remark, *first*, that there are seasons in human life when the lesson of the text speaks to our mind with peculiar force. We see the propriety of Israel being called to the consideration of what they had learned in the wilderness while its remembrance was fresh and vivid.

They stood on a narrow isthmus between two great periods of their history, and the experience they had gained in the one was meant to be helpful to them in entering upon the other. And so there are certain seasons in which the necessity and advantage of such a remembrance are powerfully suggested. There are loftier points of time which we are ever reaching, from which large tracts of our life open more clearly into view. The close of another year finds us standing on such a point. We look back on the way by which we have been led, and see many such points standing above the level of life—some of us can reckon more, some fewer. We can remember what we were as we came to each successively, what we hoped to be as we cast our eye forward from each into the future. And surely there can be no more fitting train of thought for the last Sabbath of another year than the text enforces.

During the year now closing, the character of each of us must have taken more decided form and growth; our whole mind must have declared itself more strongly either for God or against God; our nature must be more holy and spiritual than it was, or more sinful and earthly. And the likelihood is greater now than ever it was before, that if we still remain unsaved, we shall pass unsaved into eternity.

It may be that some of you can look back on the former times as better than these. You may have had impressions in other years which made you resolve to live to God, and for a time you seemed to have cast in your lot decidedly with His people, and to be striving after some sure and saving hope in Christ. Then, amid all your anxieties and struggles, it was in every sense better with you than now. Now! when your religious earnestness is gone and faded, and when, if you listened, you would hear the voice of God, "O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee? O Judah, what shall I do unto thee? for your goodness is as a morning cloud; and as the early dew it goeth away." Yet though the danger of remaining what you are has fearfully increased, the voice of a forgiving God beseeches you to return to Him. While He waits to be gracious, and while the close of the year finds you in the sanctuary, and within hearing of the gospel, He assures you that He is not willing you should perish, and pleads with you to despise no longer the birthright of your immortal souls.

II. Let us notice the spirit in which we are to make this review of life.—"Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God hath led thee." They were to bring down the thought of God into "all their life" in the

wilderness. They were to think of His presence with them all these forty years as being as real as was the pillar of cloud and fire that glided visibly before them.

They were to trace His hand in every event that befell them there. And truly God had been "good to Israel,"—feeding them with angels' food, and bringing water to them from the flinty rock,—suffering not their raiment to wax old,—daily guiding and guarding their way, and nightly illuminating the desert for them like a grand and solemn temple. Thus, in a sense altogether peculiar, it might be said that God dealt with Israel as He has not with any other people.

But we are mistaken if we seek to persuade ourselves that He has not, in as real, though not as miraculous a way, compassed our path and our lying down, and ordered all the events of our life from the first moment of our being to the present hour. Men may try to keep God out of their thoughts, but they cannot keep Him out of their lives. The door of their heart may be closed and barred against Him, but He searcheth and knoweth it, and "besets them behind and before." And if they will not acknowledge that He has been ever at their side, and bringing all the events and changes that have befallen them to bear upon their minds for one great and blessed end, at least He has been there, and the mark of His hand is upon every page of their history. Have you not often been startled by a sudden impression of His presence, as if you had met Him at some turning of your way? Have you not found Him, in seasons of darkness and trouble, face to face with you? And if you have striven to banish the impression, and fallen back into false security, or rushed into temptation, have you not done so

like the prophet, defying in his madness the drawn sword of the angel in the way who might have smitten him to the earth?

How often by affliction does our heavenly Father lead us from the way we might have marked out for ourselves, and constrain us to feel that the way by which He would lead us lies through the wilderness!

If such is the case with any of us, is there not a loud and earnest call to them to consider that affliction cometh to them not out of the dust, but visits them as a messenger from God? Thus has He been leading them away from the loud noise and the "vain show" of the world, where there is so much to draw the mind from Him, and bringing them into a "wilderness," where in the solitude and silence they may hear His voice speaking more distinctly to their souls.

Has this been the effect of His dealings with us? In looking back on the way He has led us, can we see that He has thus opened our ear to His teaching, and thus spoken with power to our hearts? Has the wilderness been to us a school of heavenly discipline and wisdom? Has the "solitary place" been a Bethel where we have had the vision and heard the voice of God? Have we learned there that, till we live to God, we have not begun to live at all? And has He made it our chief desire to redeem the rest of our time, that we may no longer live to the will of the flesh, but to the praise of His redeeming grace? With what thankfulness should we review the past, and bless Him for the trials that brought us to His feet,—for the fears and convictions that made us flee to Christ, "the hope set before us."

Surely all who are journeying to Zion will often

call to mind how first they were led to turn their faces thitherward. Remembering the former days before they were "illuminated," when they "walked according to the course of this world," will they find occasion in tracing the manner in which they were first awakened and turned to God, to praise Him for the "tender mercy" which visited them in their darkness, and guided their feet into the way of peace. Well may they meditate on these words, so full of spiritual meaning,—"the tender mercy of our God." They will reflect how they owe to it all their hopes as sinners,—how it first blessed them with the sense of forgiveness,—how it has often filled the soul with light and peace and joy in believing,—how it has brightened many a dark hour in their experience, and strengthened them in many a trial of faith,—how it has watched over them, and sustained them, and kept their feet from falling. And while humbled by reflecting how often, if left to themselves, they would have forgotten that "tender mercy," and wandered in ways of their own, they will take encouragement from the past to trust God's faithfulness and love, to believe that He will never leave them till He has led them through the wilderness by a right way to the "city of habitation."

Seek to be more deeply rooted and grounded in the love of Christ, to grow in the knowledge of all that makes Him the very Saviour you need, that yours may be a life of faith, of constant and prayerful dependence on the Son of God. Seek to be strengthened with all might by the Spirit, who is the earnest of the promised inheritance, and by whom all who are Christ's are sealed unto the day of redemption. Thus will you be led onward from strength to strength, and even in times of darkness and perplexity you

will "hear a voice behind you, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it." "I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known; I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them."

III. Let us notice, *thirdly*, the light which the text casts on the providence of God in its great ends and designs.

Israel is not exhorted simply to remember the fact that God had so led them, but to consider the end, the wise and gracious purpose for which He had led them all these forty years in the wilderness. It was that He might humble them, and prove them, and know what was in their heart.

1. Israel needed to be *humbled*. There was much in their situation to fill them with spiritual pride. They had seen the greatest miracles wrought on their behalf, they had been led out of Egypt by a mighty hand, they had been made to feel that they were a chosen and peculiar people. And God might have led them at once from Egypt into Canaan,—He might have brought them by a single step from the house of bondage to a habitation of freedom and rest. But from Egypt He led them into the dreary desert, and kept them there forty years. He dealt with them as a father with his child, not emancipating them at once from all restraint, and giving them liberty before they knew how to use it. He drew the bonds of His discipline all the more closely round them, and taught them to depend on Him and not on themselves. His own words were, "As a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee."

The same great spiritual end is kept in view in all His dealings with His people still. And therefore it is called a *discipline*, a forming and training process,—a series of methods and agencies working together for a certain and special result. By this discipline he seeks to “humble” them, to break down the pride and presumption of their wayward wills, to teach their nature, which is so self-centred and so self-satisfied, to know its weakness and to look for strength to Him. He sees how ready we are to make ourselves the great end of our life, and thus He teaches us that the end is to be Himself. Humility is the great lesson taught in the school of Christ,—the lesson that “when we are weak, then we are strong,” because “through Christ strengthening us we can do all things.” Each believer will learn this lesson by a course of dealings suited to his case. For God varies His methods of discipline as the husbandman employs different processes in preparing his grain for use. The harder and coarser kinds he bruises with the iron wheel, the lighter and softer he separates with the rod, (Isa. xxviii. 27.) And God who has given him this “discretion” will deal not less wisely or less tenderly with His children, correcting them with a lighter or heavier hand, and weighing out every drop of bitterness which is mingled in their cup. He has a gracious end in view, and He will make all things work together for that end, His glory and their good.

2. Israel needed to be proved and to see the evil of their hearts. Not that God needed to know what was in their heart, but to make its secret sinfulness clear and visible to themselves. And so in that long and monotonous wilderness life of theirs they were searched and tried, and placed in circumstances which called forth the hidden tendencies of

their nature. How little could they at first have been prepared for the fearful revelation ! That morning, after they had crossed the Red Sea, had a mirror been held up to them in which they could see the image of their future history, their murmuring and rebelliousness, their unbelief and backsliding, with what horror and indignation would they have recoiled from the sight ! How soon and how fearfully was that mystery of iniquity made manifest ! The secret corruption of their nature soon reared its crest like a serpent and hissed defiance ; their heart was seen to be viler and more hateful than the poisonous reptile that crawled in the sands of the desert.

Thus is God still dealing with His people to show them the plague of their heart. And His discipline is blessed when it leads them to pray, with the Psalmist, “Search me, O God, and know my heart ; try me, and know my thoughts ;” give me deeper discoveries of my sinfulness, that seeing how dark and hidden the root of evil is within me, I may look to Thy Divine power to extirpate it, and not trust to efforts or resolves of my own. “Who can understand his errors ? Cleanse Thou me from secret faults.”

If we have ever felt His discipline painful and hard to bear, let us consider this gracious end of it. How much better thus to know ourselves, and to know His mercy, than to be left to deceive ourselves, and build our hopes on some false foundation. Have we been made willing to submit our will to His, to be in subjection to the Father of Spirits and live ? Our Saviour, though He was a Son, learned obedience by the things that He suffered, and this is the design of all suffering in His spiritual kingdom, to teach us faith, and meekness, and patience, and submission,

to make the ways of sin bitter and those of obedience pleasant, to show us that we can only walk holily before the world when we walk humbly with our God.

The Christian character must grow gradually and harmoniously to its perfection, and the same character at different times requires a difference of discipline. The potter keeps his foot on the revolving wheel, and moulds the vessel as he turns it, and our Father in heaven moulds His children by the pressure of His hand that each may be a vessel unto honour, an ornament for the great house which He is preparing in the heavens.

If any of you have reason to fear that this great end has not begun to be accomplished in you, how earnestly are you called to remember and consider while yet there is time ! How often have you given serious, deliberate thought to the concerns of time, to the interests that bind you to a fleeting world ! Yet what comparison can the bear with the concerns of eternity which you have deliberately neglected ? “ What will it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul ? ” You would tremble at the thought of a worldly loss that would reduce you to wretchedness and want ; but what is this compared to the loss of the soul through ages that shall never end ? You may hope to begin to live at some future time to God, and to give heed to the things that concern your peace, but what can the future bring which the past has not brought, and how do you know that another year or another Sabbath of that future will be yours ? If this year closes on you still without God, it may stamp its impress on all your future life. Yet God has not ceased to remind you that there is still time for repentance, that the door of salvation is still wide open. Listen, I beseech

you, to the voice that speaketh from heaven. Turn at the call of wisdom and no more despise her counsel, and close your ears to her invitation. The Father reasons with you, the Son pleads with you, the Spirit strives with you. "We pray you in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God." Seek the Lord while He may be found ; flee to Christ while it is yet the accepted time ; believe on Him, and you will find Him a willing Saviour, and find in Him a hope and peace which the world cannot give. So will you know the happiness of those to whom the world is a wilderness, because here they have no continuing city, and who with every departing year can feel that they are nearer their heritage and home in heaven, the rest which remaineth for the people of God. "O that they were wise, that they would understand this, and consider their latter end !"

XIII.

A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench."—MATT. xii. 20.

NOT long before, His voice had been heard, saying, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart." How wonderful that it was this which pre-eminently distinguished the Holy One of God while He tabernacled on earth, that He was marked out from other men by being a meeker and lowlier man than they. And here, as we see, it was the distinctive feature of His ministry, so that, looking at the saintly band of prophets and witnesses who had come before Him, men on whose head the oil of consecration had been poured, and whose lips had been touched with a live coal from off the altar, we can see that the public teaching of Him to whom they all pointed, and of whom they all testified, was marked out from theirs by being more warmly sympathising, more sweetly persuasive, "He did not strive nor cry; neither did any man hear His voice in the streets." The step of the Master was more noiseless in His own house, His voice more gentle, than that of any of His servants. He moved about with all that power folded up in Him, yet ready to start forth at the touch of need or the cry of suffering; with all that wisdom like a "fountain sealed,"

yet ready to gush forth in words of kindness to little children, or of hope and guidance to "the ignorant and those that were out of the way." As He had said by the prophet, "The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary."

In the passage before us, which may be said to have on it a double seal of sacredness, written by a prophet, and countersigned by an evangelist, it is important to notice that it is in this aspect of His ministry, the Father contemplates His elect one with special pleasure, and holds Him forth to our regard. "Behold my servant whom I have chosen ; my beloved in whom my soul is well pleased ; I will put my Spirit upon Him, and He shall show judgment to the Gentiles. A bruised reed shall He not break, and smoking flax shall He not quench, till He send forth judgment unto victory." These are the words of God in sending the first-begotten into the world.

The imagery employed in the text represents, by two vivid emblems, two conditions of experience, or states of mind, and exhibits the character of Jesus in His dealing with each. Generally speaking, we may say that the one, "*the bruised reed*," stands for faintness of heart ; and the other, "*the smoking flax*," for feebleness of faith.

I. *Faintness of heart*, and this including—

1. The sorrow of a broken spirit ; and,
2. The sorrow of a wounded conscience.

These are cases which specially need the skill and tenderness of the Divine Physician, and in regard to His treatment of them it is said, "A bruised reed shall He not break."

Very different in its nature from the tree whose branches droop over it, and whose roots strike far down into the mould, is the reed on the river bank or in the woodland thicket, which is shaken by every wind, which quivers and rustles in the faintest breeze. So loose is its hold that a child's hand may uproot it, so fragile is its make that a child's foot may bruise it. A passing step has bent it to the earth, it lies there bruised and powerless, the next that passes may crush and break it in sunder. But the bruised reeds of the world lie in the way of Christ.

1. It is no light affliction that is pictured here, not those every-day griefs that stir the surface of the heart into ripples, and disturb its calmness for a moment, and then pass by. It is rather those great sorrows which shake the soul to its depths; which search and rouse it with a mighty power; which from the moment they come begin to reveal it to itself; which change its view of all things, so that it no longer sees them as they seemed to be in the dream of a careless life, but as they are in the pure keen light of eternity. Of the one it may be said, "The spirit of a man may sustain his infirmity," may help him to bear up against the common trials of life. Of the other it is said, "A wounded spirit, who can bear?" When the heart itself is overwhelmed, when the spring of our very nature loses its elasticity, it feels as if all strength and hopefulness were utterly gone out of it, as if it lay crushed and powerless beneath a burden too heavy for it to bear. The reed is sorely bruised, a little more will break it; but, blessed assurance, from the chastening hand of God that little more will never come. We know that there are such sorrows as in their pressure and continuance seem almost too much for nature to endure, and which in common

language we speak of as “crushing,” but we know of none that are hopeless, that are hidden from the eye, and are beyond the help of the Great Healer, the Lord of Grace, the Prince of Life. Let the weight of some sudden and terrible calamity have darkened and depressed the soul, making every other hand powerless to help, every other voice idle to comfort, it is but that there may be room for His hand, and a hearing for His voice. In the extremity of nature is His opportunity of grace, and it needs but an appeal to Him to bring Him near as “a present help in trouble,” ay, to change the whole aspect of that trouble as a blessed agency for lifting the soul out of its depths of misery nearer to Him. He lays no greater burden on us than He can help us to bear. He tempers His fatherly discipline to our need, and gives strength according to our day, so that the rough wind and the east wind have not leave to blow together, but the one is stayed before the other begins to blow.

2. But there is another trouble which goes deeper and seems heavier still, and that is the anguish of a wounded conscience, when the soul is thoroughly roused from its slumbers by the sense of sin, of guilt, of condemnation, of the righteous anger of a holy God. You have heard or read of men bearing this load of wretchedness, pierced with this deep and rankling wound for years, and looking round about them on God’s fair earth, and up to God’s blue heaven, as lost spirits might gaze on them out of abysses of despair. Such for years was the experience of him whose dream of the Pilgrim’s Progress was to himself, in every stage of it, a sober waking reality ; many a weary day, over rough roads and through Sloughs of Despond, did he bear his burden before he found the “Evangelist” who

pointed to the wicket, with its bright inscription, leading the wanderer into the narrow way of life. Such, too, was his case who could only compare himself, in what he thought his hopeless doom, to the sailor who has fallen overboard, and is floating away from all human aid to perish alone in the wild waters.*

We would not be understood to say that all must pass through this dark and troubled experience into the enjoyment of peace with God, that all must go through these iron gates into the free air and open prospects of the Christian life. God forbid ! We shrink from saying, nor have we any warrant from Scripture to say, what amount of conviction must precede or accompany the process of a genuine conversion, of a real and saving change of heart.

But we do believe that in all but a few exceptional cases, as theirs to whom grace has come in infancy or early childhood, so that they seem to be "sanctified from the womb," there must be that sense of personal guilt, that apprehension of deserved wrath, which fills the soul with inward fear and trouble, which dispels its former peace, and forces itself into utterance in that exceeding loud and bitter cry, "What must I do to be saved ?" If I speak to any such, I speak not my own words, but the words of the Master, Christ,—"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, *because* He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised." Straitly shut up, heavily fettered,

* Cowper, in his poem on "The Castaway," the most mournful lines, perhaps, that were ever written by a human pen. He has now "escaped safe to land."

doomed to death as you may seem to be, despair not, drooping captive, the Angel of Deliverance is at hand! He makes His way in the dark night through close walls and guarded gates, and if you but arise at His voice, He will lead you out of this dim and stifling prison-house to stand in the open street and watch the dawning in the heavens of the day of your salvation. The extremity of need is His opportunity of help. He has added to no load, but lightened many a one. He has riveted no chain, but loosened many. He has never broken the bruised reed, but tenderly stooped over it, and raised it from the dust, and shielded it from wind and storm, and by the virtue of His touch given it the power to grow up and flourish for ever as a green olive-tree in the house of God—a lasting memorial of His grace. For every hurt of conscience, a fresh leaf grows on the Tree of Life, and there is a hand to reach it down.

II. Another condition of experience or state of mind seems to be shadowed forth in the other emblem of our text : “The smoking flax will He not quench.” We may regard this as figuring both the feeble beginnings of grace in the heart of the awakened and returning sinner, and its lingering vestiges in the declining or backsliding Christian. There is here no clear or steady flame, only smoke ascending from the flax to show that a spark has fallen into it, or that one remains yet alive, though so faint that it trembles on the verge of extinction, and is only apparent by some thin blue thread of vapour rising from it into the air. A careless foot might extinguish it, a few drops of rain might quench it, a gust of wind might scatter it into ashes.

1. Such is the beginning of grace in the heart of man. There is no outward sign to mark the precise moment when the Spirit of life from God first enters into it. He cometh "not with observation." Of course there must be some inward evidence of His presence, but this at first so faint and dim that the soul itself cannot accept it as sufficient to prove the blessed reality of its hope. It may feel that there is a change from what it was, but nothing like the change into which it would wish to be, so far short of this that it can take no comfort,—may write bitter things against itself, and sorrow as if there were no hope. Its faith seems so weak, its repentance so shallow, its love so cold, its better thoughts and longings so transient and wavering, its whole frame of mind so loose and precarious, that it cannot venture to believe that the life of grace is indeed begun. As yet there is no fire, only smoke; but where there is smoke there is fire.

A spark smouldering in the embers sends forth no genial warmth, no cheerful light, fills not the room with its ruddy mellow fireside glow, brightening the faces that gather round; yet, out of that spark, if it is only nursed and tended, the fire may kindle up on the hearth, and gladden all the house, and streaming through the cottage pane may shine as a lamp and signal of hope and welcome to guide some belated wanderer through the darkness and storm. There is an infinite difference between that little spark and a cold dead heap of ashes, for the seed of fire is there. Even so it is in the first turning of the soul to God. In the very conviction of its sinfulness, in the very sense of its shortcomings, in the pressure of its unbelief, in the sorrow for its want of grace, in its striving and praying for something higher and better, there is a spark of vital heat.

This is the pulse of spiritual life beginning its feeble beat, and there is an infinite difference between this and its bygone trance of death. All that is needed is that He who has infused it should guard and cherish it, and this He has promised to do: “The smoking flax shall He not quench.” He does not despise “the day of small things.” He will “not forsake the work of His own hands,” and that little spark once lighted, is as safe from extinction as the star in heaven which burns on unquenched from age to age, as sacred in His sight as the fire of love which glows in the heart of the seraphim.

What capabilities of good may be folded up in that little living spark! Thus there may lie in embryo in the bosom of a child now trained in one of our Christian homes or taught in the Sunday-school, all the vast and wholesome influence of the future devoted minister or missionary of the cross. Out of it may be kindled that holy flame which shall gladden and illumine all within its range, shine as a great light to the people who sit in darkness, and guide many a wanderer into the way of peace.

It is not the strength of faith which makes it real, but the principle; a grain of gold is still gold; a spark of fire is still fire. And the Lord Jesus deals very tenderly with the feeble of the flock, the children of the house. His voice is kind, His look is pleasant, to the trembling inquirer, the lowly penitent, the new-born convert, the young disciple—not overdriving, not overburdening them—watching over the first movements of the new life, winning their trust and love, guiding His flock like a shepherd who “gathers the lambs with His arm and carries them in His bosom.” Better are they in His hands than in ours; He

knows that they are tender, and “leads them on softly as they are able to endure.”

2. Again this exercise of gentleness may be regarded as applying to His restoring grace, to His preserving from extinction the spiritual life when it has declined and languished. We know that love may lose its first fervour, and devotion its first heartiness and zeal, that the conscience may lose its sensitiveness, and the mind its spiritual tone,—that the whole life may subside and settle down at a point far below that standard of holiness, that high ideal at which it aimed in its first consecration to God.

How far this sad reaction, this backsiding and decline can go, it is not for us to say. But we know it may go so far that all that is left of life may be like the spark in smoking flax, or the weak and fitful flame of a lamp when the oil is well-nigh spent, a light that flickers but does not shine. The “things that remain are ready to die,” would die in the cold and faithless heart if His hand did not stir these embers, if His breath did not blow upon the expiring flame. Then the graciousness of Christ is seen in the warning-cry that awakens the slumbering virgins, in the sharp chastisement that brings the soul to itself. “I have somewhat against thee, because thou has left thy first love. Remember, therefore, from whence thou art fallen, and repent and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.” Then, in the first bitterness of self-reproach, when the spirit of repentance is poured out, and it is ashamed and confounded at the thought of its departure from God, He is near to inspire and strengthen the wish to return, near to draw it closer to Himself by the cord of love. “I will not contend for ever, neither will I be

always wroth ; for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made. I have seen his ways and will heal him ; I will lead him also, and will restore comforts unto him and to his mourners."

In the light of these words, what touching impressiveness do we not perceive in the apostle's pleading with men " by the meekness and gentleness of Christ ! " It must be a cold heart that does not feel it, and surely no common guilt must lie on the soul that remains hardened against it. For to know His graciousness we must think of His power. He *could* " break the bruised reed " as he smote the barren fig-tree ; He *could* " quench the smoking flax " as He quenched the sunlight of Egypt. But He will not. The voice which called the world into being loves to say, " Come unto me." The hand which moulded the world reaches down to heal the broken in heart, to wipe away the mourner's tear. That voice speaks to every sinner. That hand holds out all the gifts of salvation to all who will not turn away from them and perish in their sins. And it is a solemn thing to set in contrast with these words of gentleness and mercy, other words which fell from the lips of Christ, " Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." " Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven." " Strive to enter in at the strait gate : for many will seek to enter in, but shall not be able." " Many are called, but few are chosen." " Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." " If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me."

Oh that those still dead in trespasses would hear the voice of the Son of God, and come to Him that they might

have life! Beware of thinking that there is life because there is a name to live. Many a flame of profession is lighted from earthly sources, and lacks the living oil of grace. And if this is all, it must be quenched, it must go out at midnight when you have most need of it, and leave you to go alone through the dark valley into the starless, hopeless, endless darkness beyond!

F R A G M E N T S.

I.

“HIS mercies are new every morning.” — We do not think so ; we think they are old, but they are not. They come to us each morning fresh minted from God’s treasury, and stamped with the seal of His love—each one is a thought of God toward us.

Those who give themselves up to the service of sin, enter the palace of pleasure by wide portals of marble, which conceal the low wicket behind which leads into the fields, where they are in a short time sent to feed swine.

God’s gifts are all God-like, they are bestowed with royal bounty and largeness. He not only gives the *gift* of eternal life, but adds to it “the recompense of reward.”

What we call Providence may be explained as the continual outflowing of that creative power that called us into being, now extended for our preservation and happiness. And when we consider how slight an accident would derange this wonderful and exquisite mechanism of the frame, it is marvellous how it is so lovingly and watchfully preserved.

God will “hear speedily,” but His speedily is not our speedily—we measure time by the duration of “threescore years and ten.” God measures time by the duration of His own eternity—He knows when it is the best time to give the answer—the right time. He has both the

love that delights to bestow the request, and the wisdom to know when it should be withheld. He *does* hear and speedily, and the answer comes when the right moment to grant it has come.

Wherever we are we may pray—the voice of prayer can reach Him wherever it is raised in this world of His. The same blue sky bends over it, the same sun lightens it from side to side. It is all God's house, and from every corner of it the voice of prayer may ascend. In the closet as in the temple cloister you can pray—in the silent solitude as in the busy haunts of men—in calm retirement as amid the whirl and bustle of active life. On a journey Abraham's servant prayed. In the field Isaac prayed. In the midst of the perplexities and cares of public life the good king of Israel, Asa, prayed. On the housetop, Peter prayed. In the prison, Paul and Silas prayed. On the Mount of Olives and in Gethsemane, Jesus prayed.

When we pray, "Thy will be done on earth," we too often seem to think that it is something that is to be done in the outside world, and not in the hidden daily life of each individual. It is by each one in his own sphere, be it great or small, doing the will of God—by one heart after another being influenced by the love of God—by one mind after another being enlightened, that the glorious end is to be reached—God's will being "done on earth as it is in heaven." There is often a very striking sight to be witnessed at night in the neighbourhood of a great city. When all the sky is dark and starless, you see it brightly illuminated just over the city, you would fancy it was caused by some great conflagration; but no, it is the reflection from the many twinkling lamps scattered up and down the leagues of streets, and so every lamp in the

darkest and closest alley, and every rushlight that burns in the poorest chamber, add their mite towards this bright illumination of the heavens above.

There is something grandly sublime in what may be called the death silence of Jesus. From Gethsemane to Calvary no voice was heard from Him ; but though He was thus silent, more than two or three witnesses were raised up to confess Him. Judas casting down the price of his treachery in the temple, saying he had “ betrayed innocent blood.” There was Pilate’s wife pleading for “that just person.” There were Herod and Pilate declaring they found “no fault in Him.” There was the dying thief rebuking his railing companion, confessing, “This Man hath done nothing amiss.” There was the Roman centurion exclaiming, “Truly this was the Son of God.”—A strange group of witnesses. The darkest clouds of the Saviour’s humility were pierced by the bright light of His Divinity, from the day when a new star was lighted in heaven, and stood over the humblest cabin in Bethlehem, till the day of Calvary, when nature put on mourning at its Maker’s funeral.

It is as vain to try and seal God’s truth, as it was to seal the sepulchre. Many a time princes and priests have plotted against it ; it has been killed and buried ; they have sealed the stone and set the watch ; but the morning of the resurrection has always come, and the dreadful light has flashed in the eyes of its enemies and they have fallen to the ground.

Much harm is done unconsciously by fettering the Holy Spirit’s movements and cramping His operations within straight and rigid lines of theory.

Every morning has some new miracle of sunrise. It is

the same sun, the same atmosphere, the same earth, yet what everlasting freshness and changefulness in each day's birth and revival. The dawn is always new,—no two sunsets are the same. And God divides the light from the darkness in human spirits in divers ways.

“And Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him,” is the brief record we have of the life of Enoch, and in it we have all that is valuable in it. We have here the *spirit* of his life—a life of faith, a life of righteousness. “He pleased God,” and the great lesson of his life to the men of his own day, and to us now, is this, That it is of far more value and importance to have this testimony “that he pleased God,” than to win the praise of man.

There is an enduring influence in a life's example, whether the sphere of the life be a cottage or a palace, whether it tell upon a private circle or a great community,—a kind of immortality in the words spoken or acts done from day to day which go to make up the sum of life. We would do well to remember this, “That no man liveth to himself;” for good or evil your life is daily speaking as it is in progress. “No man dieth to himself;” for good or evil the memory of it will speak to survivors from the grave.

It often happens, and we see the mark of a good Providence in it, that in the calculations of the wicked there is generally one mistake in the reckoning which comes out wrong in the sum. The parts of some unholy scheme may be closely fitted together; but some wheel or spring is overlooked, it either goes false or does not go at all, and deranges the whole. And so from the murderer who, with the guilt of murder upon his conscience, lays a plot to fasten the guilt of it upon an innocent man, and finds that he has sprung a mine beneath his own feet, down to the

youth who commits a theft, or the child who tells a lie, there is generally something done or something not done which becomes a clue, something that throws a flash of revelation on the guilty face. A little more thought or sense would have guarded against it ; but it is just this that we think should be noticed—the *little more* is not there. It seems to be a law of God's moral government, that wickedness and wisdom do not go hand in hand, that wickedness is not only guilt in the sight of God, but foolishness in the sight of man, so that we have a right to say to every man who imagines mischief in his heart, “Be sure your sin will find you out.”

One of the most beautiful attitudes of faith is adoring yet confiding—covering the face before God's glory, uncovering the heart before God's goodness.

The Christian life cannot be a hidden life. Its roots are hidden, for they are deep down in the heart ; but its fruits must be visible, for they are to be seen in the daily life.

The “I will” of God has a force and reality which the “I wills” of man can never have. All Christians cannot have so majestic a sphere of influence to move in as Paul the apostle had ; but it is laid upon each individually to do all he can for others by his influence over them. The small fountain that trickles down drop by drop may yet assuage the thirst of some wayfarer, the little light in the cottage window may guide some wanderer on his way. And so each Christian should at least try to help others, and bring some to Christ. It is not so much his actions as his *life* that will influence. Many a one who cannot or will not read a written epistle, is forced to read a “*living epistle*” when he sees the name of Jesus graven on some life with which he comes in daily contact.

“Signs and wonders” may burst open the door of the understanding, but it is only the finger of God which holds the key and can open the door of the heart.

The most simple and persuasive preaching is that in which Christ is most evidently set forth—where the servant stands back that his master may be the better seen. And so that life is the most useful where self is most forgotten—is as the pedestal to the statue which it holds up to public view, or as the glass of a lamp which from its transparency and clearness lets the light shine through in such purity as to be itself invisible. A life sanctified and guided by the Spirit that was in Christ.

Good desires are like slight breezes that touch but the surface of the waters; but when the mind is really under the influence of the Spirit of God, it is like a mighty rushing wind that gathers up all the forces of the mind and carries them onward in one direction.

“Go in this thy might.” In what might? Of God’s promise, “I will be with thee.” But it means further—go in the feeling of thy weakness and unworthiness—go in this mind, that God alone can help thee—go in the *might of thy weakness*, and thou shalt save Israel. Yes, that is might—the might of every Christian—this the mind to which God would bring all His children, the end of His dealings with them. They must be quite emptied, and then they can be filled with His strength. It is the first chapter in the history of Gideon, the preparation for his work, and the performance of that work in his might of weakness. All God’s children are called to this. Cherish this feeling, temper, spirit, and look to His *all* strength and grace alone—“Go in *this* thy *might*, and all will be well.”

A man's estimate of life is measured by what he thinks of a day. God gives us opportunities by *days*, not by *years*. Many have a vague notion of a day ; they think nothing of it, and therefore never live at all ; they deal too much in generalities—God has no servants who are faithful in *years* and not in *days*.

Jesus came into the world as a saving light, as if judgment was an after-necessity forced on Him by our unwillingness to believe. It is not my work—not I the Saviour, but mercy abused that judges you. “It is not I that judge,” the last audible proof from the Saviour’s lips that judgment is His “strange work.” He came not to judge—the unbelief of man has forced Him to lay aside the white robe of mercy and put on the black attire of doom.

No common man must “Micaiah the son of Imlah” have been to have been honoured with the hatred of such a man as Ahab king of Israel. What my God commands, that will I speak—where my God leads, there will I follow, was the spirit of his life. I am not my own—I have no right to please myself and follow my own will, was the utterance of his daily life.

God often speaks of Himself as a God of might and majesty before He makes a promise, as if to make us look at this, and then show us the heart of a father, as if to teach us that the hand that formed the world and raised the heavens is the same that stoops to earth to uphold and steady our steps.

There is no such word as *impossible* in the vocabulary of faith.

Whenever a sinner falls down—borne down by the burden of sin, he cannot *but* fall on a step of God’s throne

of mercy. Whenever the cry for help ascends, it cannot but be where the hand of God can reach the penitent.

God's promises are the italics of the Bible.

The bright sunshine puts out every other light—heavenly light puts out the earthly ; so in the shining of God's face the fires of our corrupt and evil nature go out. How wonderful that He who could in a moment crush the gates of the soul, and send the soul itself to perdition, should yet stand and ask us to let Him come in.

When weakest then are we strongest, for then we are withdrawn from all creature strength to look to God alone.

The nearer we live to the light of God, the darker will appear the shadow of sin.

Whatever is moved by God's hand has in it all the power of the hand that set it in motion, however insignificant it may be in itself.

God often leads His people by a way that they know not, but never by a way that *He* does not know.

So many of this world's harvests fail, because the seed has not been sown in prayer.

Many say, Let me first go and bid the world farewell, and then "I will follow thee ;" let me first go and do this or that, it is a very important matter. But nothing is so important that it cannot wait for this—nothing that has to be done in this world, but will be better done if we do it with Jesus ; and anything that we cannot do with Jesus had better not be done at all.

Light is a beautiful thing in itself, but it is most beautiful when viewed in its effects ; holiness is beautiful in itself, but most so when exemplified in the life. The Gospel is beautiful in itself, but never so beautiful as when

read with a living commentary, when we can point to some life and say, There is the Gospel.

Many Christians are like lighthouses in the day—they hold out no light, they are all darkness, their Christianity is written in dead letters, no one can read them, they are of no use.

Every Christian is to *shine*, but all are not set as stars in the firmament; some are only like the little taper shining in the lowly cottage. But in this life the little taper is often more useful than the bright star set in yonder blue heaven.

No work that is faithfully done is done in vain. Though the seed we cast on the waters may seem to be lost, yet it will spring, it may be, many days hence; our words may seem to be spoken in vain, because we do not hear an echo responding to them,—we may not hear the response to-day, but we shall hear, perhaps long years hence, when the words have died away; or the echo may not be heard till *we* have passed away from the reach of all earthly sounds.

Many try to make God their *refuge*, but never think of Him as their *home*, the centre to which their hearts continually turn.

There is nothing inconsistent between the deepest reverence and the most simple trust. They that fear God most trust Him most. In this I see faith in her most beautiful attitude—adoring, yet confiding—veiling the face before God's majesty, baring the heart before God's goodness.

To be able to subdue the angry thought, and still the angry spirit, shows more courage than to be bravest and foremost in the heat of battle.

“Faint, *yet pursuing*,” let us look at this as a great rule and great spirit of Christian work.

It is said that in the profound depth of ocean there is a perpetual undisturbed calm that no storms can reach, even though the surface of the waters be lashed into fury by the hurricane. Even so is the peace in a believer's soul—the troubles from without cannot reach to disturb the calm that reigns in the depths of his soul.

That selfish, self-anatomising Christian is a morbid and sickly growth. There is nothing like some zealous, active work for Christ, for removing many doubts and fears. The *life* will soon run itself clear.

If the story of Christ's life ended with the mourners standing round the cross, and the women carrying the spices to the grave, it would be the most touching story that ever was told, but it would be no gospel story to the sinner. But it does not end there and thus ; we see the folded grave-clothes, and the stone with its broken seal ; we see the print of returning footsteps on the threshold of the sepulchre, and angels pointing to the place where the Lord lay ; we see Jesus ascending in glory ; we see Him sitting down on His Father's throne, the great High Priest and Intercessor, the "Captain of salvation," made perfect through suffering, that He might bring many sons and daughters to glory.

What a precious alchymy is that by which all earth's disappointments are changed to heaven's appointments—the wise, gracious, loving, needed discipline of a Father's hand.

"We are not atheists—we believe that God is," but there is a shutting up of this truth in the intellect, instead of letting it go from the intellect to the heart, and pass from the heart into the life. It is not always to acknowledge that "God is," that makes the difference between the atheist and the Christian ; but to *believe it in the earth* makes the difference between the converted and the

unconverted, the carnal and the regenerate man. Wher-
ever there is a sense of forgiveness there must have gone
before it a sense of sin.

As long as a man tries to heal himself, and keeps away
from the cross, he only aggravates his wound and makes
his burden greater.

Unless we know all our sin, have a deep sense of sin,
we cannot know all God's mercy, or all Christ's love in
forgiving sin.

Whenever David confessed his sin, pardon is pronounced.
As if God had been *waiting* to hear the first word, to catch
the first upturned look of penitence.

On earth even the mind is carnal, dragged down at best
by the body of sin. In heaven the very body will be
spiritual.

Unsanctified knowledge of the truth is only like a clear
cold light—as moonlight, which gives colour to no flower,
nor ripeness to any fruit. But the knowledge of which
Paul speaks, (Col. i. 9,) a personal knowledge of Christ,
is like the warm and cheering light of the sun—the oil
that supplies the lamp of Christian watchfulness and keeps
it burning—the fuel that feeds the altar fire of Christian love.

“Patience worketh experience, and experience hope.”
We think of patience as creeping slowly along the ground ;
hope as soaring with eager flight towards heaven ; but
experience comes in between, like the wing that is to lift
patience into hope.

Omnipotence realised by faith is the secret of the
Christian's strength. On what a vantage-ground it plants
even the weakest and most lonely believer. What a poor
thing human power is after all ; it can destroy the body,
but it cannot touch the soul : “I give unto them eternal

life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father which gave them me is greater than all, and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." These two hands clasped as it were round that life, no power can touch it.

Whatever God has said shall be, must be. Take your stand on this rock, "*The Lord hath said.*"

You may stand trembling on the rock, but the rock never trembles under you.

The tears of godly sorrow are oftentimes the seeds of spiritual joys.

Men are not saved by *faith in generalities* any more than they are saved in crowds. Each man must be saved individually ; he must in his own person come before God to seek for pardon, and he must believe in Jesus Christ as a Saviour from sin—as *his Saviour, to save him from his sin.*

Every day, every hour each of us is casting seed into the ground. Every thought, every word of ours will have a lasting influence, must bring forth fruit to all eternity.

In whatever is right and true there is an element of indestructible life and strength, and on the other hand there is an element of weakness and retribution in all that is wrong ; even though it may seem expedient, it must fail in the end.

Those men must dig very deep indeed, who would spring their mines under the Rock of Ages.

It is a man's thoughts that show the true spirit of his life, not his words, for they are often used to conceal his thoughts. Not his actions, for they are often at variance with his thoughts. But there can be no hypocrisy in the thoughts : "Like as a man thinketh, so is he."

II.

To believe in God is to find peace ; but to have little faith is to have little peace. A stronger faith brings us greater peace ; to have the heart *stayed* on God is to have *perfect* peace.

It is said that often in the very heart of a hurricane there is a profound calm, and a vessel anchored within this charmed circle may see the tempest careering all round it, and not a ripple disturb the surface of its own waters. Such is the peace of God when it enters into the heart of man. The stormy sea of life all round, troubles closing him on every side ; but within there is a perfect calm, a firm and sure reliance on his God. A peace reigns within that passeth understanding.

There can be no real life without breath, movement, growth, and perfection. The breath of the resurrection life is prayer ; the movement of the resurrection life is Christian activity ; its growth is increase in holiness ; and the perfection of the resurrection life is the being made like unto Him when He shall appear the second time with power and great glory.

We are too apt to get into the way of using phrases without thinking of what they mean. So many say, "I believe in the Holy Ghost," and never seem to realise the *personality* of the Spirit of God. And God seems at this

time to be showing us, forcing upon our minds the real living presence of the Holy Ghost in this great work of revival. We talk of the *influences* of the Spirit as if we thought there would be influences without an agent. The Holy Spirit is as real, and living, and present a *Person* as the Son or the Father, and if we realised this great truth more, and dwelt more upon it, it would surely have a more visible influence upon our life.

Spiritual-mindedness seems to me to convey the most perfect idea of communion with the Spirit, to have the mind of the Spirit dwelling in us, our feelings and desires and actions under its control and guidance, (John xvi. 7.) How little we feel the power of this. If we really entered into it, the Spirit would be more a *living* Spirit to us, His work, to bring us to Christ and show us the things of Christ.

Assurance is a reasonable hope, a trust built on true and firm foundations, not a *presumption*.

Assurance is a desirable thing for every Christian to attain to ; it is not indispensable to salvation ; *faith* is the only thing without which we *cannot* be saved. It is within the power of all to attain to it ; we should not be so often urged to it in the Bible if it were impossible to attain it. It adds much to the Christian's joy and strength and usefulness.

“Look on us,” and “he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive somewhat of them.” Now this is what man will *not* do to God, he will not believe God's word. We trust more to our fellow-creature's word, expect more from the natural kindness of the human heart, than from God. In writing a letter, or going up to a door, or making an audible appeal, men seem to feel they are doing something,

and look for the result. But offering up a prayer to God they look upon—I know not how—as if they were shooting an arrow into the clouds, with this difference, that the arrow returns to earth, but the prayer vanishes into air. They may not say so, but they virtually disbelieve God's word, and the reality and power of prayer. Jesus stands here to-day, He says to each one of you, "Look on me," expecting to receive something from me, and that "something" the very thing you need. Will you give heed to His word? Will you look to Him and expect to receive, or will you turn away as if they were idle words?

"He will abundantly pardon." The showers of rain are needed to fertilise the earth, and make the seed spring up in the ground. We have not only *needful* showers, but look around on the overflowing rivers and the broad ocean, this is God's abundance. The heat and light of the sun is needful to bring the fruits of the earth to maturity; but look at the flood of light that is poured on this earth, penetrating into every corner, gladdening the meanest and most insignificant thing that lives or moves, this is God's abundance, this the measure by which He deals out His gifts to man. And when He pardons He not only receives the sinner into His family but makes him a son, He puts shoes on his feet and a chain of gold about his neck, He puts on his finger the ring of adoption and clothes him with the pure robe of righteousness. "He will abundantly pardon."

It is not the stature of the man among his fellows that is his real measure; unassuming greatness passes for littleness amongst men. The world knows little of its noblest men, for "man looks on the outward appearance, but God looks on the heart." Pharaoh has a pyramid to point out

his resting-place, but Moses rests in a sepulchre which no man knows to this day.

Just as there is nothing so difficult on earth as to live a consistent, earnest Christian life, so nothing is easier or more common than to live the counterfeit. The "tinkling cymbal" often makes the greatest noise in the services of the temple.

Grace must go as deep down as sin has gone.

God looks on the heart. He does not expect to find any one heart pure and sinless. But He sees what is its desire and direction—what is its governing motive—what its mastering impulse—what its desire. There are many cross currents in the human heart, but what is the *set* of its current?—to God or the world? to holiness or sin?

The prayerful desire will strengthen into earnest obedience.

Men look at the footprints, and seeing they are in the way to the sanctuary, conclude the heart must be on the way to heaven. God looks at footprints also, but they are the prints of the thoughts, and they often point in an opposite direction from the eyes. Man looks to the gift on the altar—God looks on the motive that has laid it there.

If there is any desire towards Him, God knows it, for He has put it into your heart—He will not despise even the life that is in the bruised reed and smoking flax. It is a life of His own planting, and He will nourish it; He sees the faint pulse beating, and He will strengthen it.

Christians should strive so to live that they may show those things that are lovely in the Christian character, not only to those who see the root from which they grow, and

thus judge of the fruit, but lovely in the sight of those who will only judge of the root by the fruit that they see.

There is to be no thinking without action in the Christian life, no contemplation without effort; earnest thought must lead to honest endeavour.

Let a man keep the spirit of a *learner* and he will keep humble; as soon as he speaks as a *doer* or *attainer*, pride enters into his heart.

To be serving Christ is the real secret of all true contentment, happiness, and usefulness. If we remember what the name of Christian really implies—it is not a mere name, but a real life going on from day to day, a striving to serve Christ, to carry out into honest action all we have heard and read. . . . Sit at Jesus' feet and learn this lesson of contentment, in *doing* the work given us, "We can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth us."

The frail ark of bulrushes floating on the waters of the Nile could not perish because life was in it. The life of God is in the truth, therefore it lives.

It is one of the deepest truths of God's spiritual kingdom, that man's time of need is God's time of mercy. Man's time of extremity is God's hour of opportunity. At the darkest hour of spiritual distress the dawn of grace is at hand. When men get to the end of all their expedients, God is only at the beginning of His work.

All true sense of need must lead to prayer, an appeal from our weakness to God's strength.

It would only be at the request of the great and mighty of the earth that England's Majesty would display her treasures; to none less than princes would she show her power and riches, throw open her arsenals, and point to her fleets, display the wealth of her cities and treasuries. But it is

the prayer of the destitute that has power with God ; not all the powers of earth or hell could move the gates of the kingdom of heaven, but at the trembling knock of prayer these gates open of their own accord. The cry of the needy, the tear of the penitent, the lisping prayer of the little child—these have power to move His mighty hand—these draw out the riches of the glory of His grace.

Men are ready to set up agencies, but forget the great Agent ; they set up machinery, but seem to forget the great motive power that must set all in harmonious working.

Many seem to think that the gates of heaven are to be entered by some right of birth or name ; like the gates of a palace, they are open only to the nobility, and coming from a godly stock, and belonging to a Christian community, they think they carry about with them the warranted certificate and are ready to produce it at any moment. It is well godliness cannot be bequeathed, or else ungodliness would be inherited also. Though we see a Cain in the first-born of Adam, we see also that Jeroboam the son of Nebat “could not prevent there being in his child some good thing towards the Lord God of Israel.” Though we see an Absalom walking out of the house of David, we see coming forth untainted from the corrupt court of Ahaz the good King Hezekiah.

The actions of life are the fruit of the life tree.

Repentance, or change of heart, is a radical or *root* change, a new life infused into the life, that flows into all the branches.

Fruits meet for repentance may briefly be said to be those that are directly opposed to *besetting sins*. (Where there has been pride, there will be humility ; where covetousness, liberality ; where dishonesty, justice and truth.)

These fruits (of repentance) are not so much religious duties or acts of a special nature, but the common average produce of daily life. They are to be seen in the common intercourse and common duties and callings of every-day life. They are not exotics grown in seclusion, under the shelter of the hot-house ; not the blanched and sickly virtues of the cloister, but the hardy and healthy plants of every-day open-air life, often found *most* beautiful and attractive under the chilling storm or drenching rain shining brightest in the life of suffering and patient endurance, tried in stern conflicts, purified in the furnace of great affliction.

The tie that binds the disciple to his Lord is not to be weakened by time, not to be rent by accident, not to be sundered by death, because He has made him a partaker of His *life*.

It is remarked how prominently *life* is brought before us in the Saviour's ministry, as if He had ever before Him that He was standing in the midst of death.

We are not to be satisfied with what we *first* know of Christ, that is only the beginning of a life of knowing. There is to be a growing knowledge and a growing trust. It is the blessedness, privilege, glory of believers thus to know Christ.

The life of faith is hidden in its sources, but it cannot be so in its products or effects. There can be no *living* branch on the true vine that remains unfruitful. The fruit is the highest proof, the greatest consummation of the life and the fruit always has the seed at its heart.

A Christian is to be an *ornament* to the faith, not merely a partaker, but glorifying God by the beauty of his life To bring forth fruit is to be living to the glory and honour

of God. There is no right desire, no good thing in the believer's heart but what is the work of God, and it is to His glory that it should be manifested in the life. He is not merely to show that there is life, but life that brings forth fruit to perfection, (such graces most resemble the mind that was in Christ.) "God that giveth," or the *giving One*. He is not only the promising God, but the giving God.

Many men think more of Christianity than of Christ.

One often comes to cross roads in life, where the foot seems arrested, and we halt, uncertain which way to follow ; but it is just here Christ comes to meet us and to guide us on.

Patience is faith suffering—love is faith acting—hope, faith expectant.

There is a great difference in the way men walk through the world. "Some go through God's house with their eyes open, and see pictures on every wall, and others go on with closed eyes, every chamber is blank to them."

Faith must conquer even when weakest, because it is a divine thing. An eternal life is in it, because it clings to the promise of Him, and lives in the life of Him who has overcome.

The footsteps of God's people are not always beside still waters, and in green pastures, but in the rugged mountain path, and along the hot dreary desert way. Abraham was there—David was there—Elijah was there—and a greater than Elijah was there, the "Man of sorrows." Each child of God must walk in that rough way. Whenever the seal of God is set on his brow, and the oil of consecration poured on his head, he must be as Christ was—he must be conformed to His likeness in this also—must fill

up his “measure of the afflictions of Christ for His body’s sake, which is the Church.” But with this ever before him to strengthen him—the “Man Christ Jesus,” the “Man of sorrows,” who goes before him, who has sounded the depth of every sorrow. We may talk of being forsaken, but there is only One who was ever *forsaken*, who could realise what it is to be utterly forsaken, to see no friend between earth and heaven ; He who once cried, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ?”

The Christian is often in darkness and perplexity, but let him have firm hold of one word of God, and he has what will guide him through. Trials come, but let him have one promise to rest on, and he has a strong consolation. Temptations come, let him catch them on the shield of faith, and the fiery darts fall harmless at his feet. In all times, with God’s word to lay hold of, the Christian can possess his soul in patience.

All our strength lies in our weakest point.

You may have been struck, while standing beside a fountain, with the freeness and spontaneousness with which the waters were given forth—gushing out so fresh and clear, without effort, like a pulse beating on ceaselessly, noiselessly. And if the basin overflows, it is kept full to overflow, and this goes on day by day, year by year. Such is the fountain of love in God, ever flowing forth fresh and constant to man, ceaselessly, noiselessly, without effort. How silently the sun rises day by day to gladden and revive all nature. How silently the refreshing dews come down. And so with spiritual gifts—the greatest gift of all—God sends no loud proclamation before Him. His love is ever flowing forth in a ceaseless, silent stream.

The least grace is of more value than the richest gift—

the least saint in the kingdom of heaven is greater as a saint, than the greatest prophet as a prophet.

A mere excitement of religious feeling is as different from genuine religion, as the mountain torrent, that dries up faster than it rose, is to the constant stream with its calm perennial flow, fed from hidden sources in the everlasting hills.

Without the grace of God religious knowlege is but a cumbersome burden; without the hidden springs of faith to sustain it, religious feeling is a mere effervescence; without love to God in the heart, religious activity is only a decorous dissipation.

Though I cannot read my name and surname in the book of life in heaven, I can read my name in God's book of grace on earth—in that "*whosoever*" I am included—I cannot put myself out of the circle God has marked out with His own hand.

If your name is written in the Book of Life in heaven, it will be manifest by a holy, humble, crucified life on earth. This is the sign and seal that may be seen and read of all men,—“Let him that nameth the name of Christ, depart from all iniquity.”

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